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**Digital society**  
**Pre-released statement: Sustainable development**

For use in November 2024

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**Instructions to candidates**

- Pre-released statement required for higher level paper 3.

## **E-waste: A global challenge**

This pre-released statement outlines the real-world nature of a challenge and intervention related to the DP digital society higher level extension. The pre-released statement should be used by candidates to plan and conduct extended inquiries in advance of paper 3.

- Challenge topic(s): Sustainable development
- 5 • Area(s) for inquiry: Managing pollution and waste

In addition to the information contained in this statement, candidates should also consider relevant connections to additional digital society concepts, content, and contexts.

This pre-released statement will extend the concepts and content addressed at standard level. Teachers are recommended to address a number of scenarios within this context.

### **10 About the challenge**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) Report from 2019, a *New Circular Vision for Electronics*, stated that the world produces 50 million tonnes of e-waste a year, which is worth USD 62.5 billion. Less than 20 % of e-waste is recycled, and 80 % is disposed of, usually in landfill sites. The WEF’s report stated that the rate of growth of e-waste has been 5 % per year since 2014.

- 15 Today’s lifestyle is contributing to the problem of e-waste, with households, schools and businesses owning multiple digital devices, from desktop computers to mobile (cell) phones. The more products are purchased, the more waste is generated once they become obsolete, resulting in a large volume of potentially hazardous e-waste. Hardware and software manufacturers are also accountable partly due to the rapid developments in technology.
- 20 This pre-released statement introduces two interventions designed to decrease the environmental impact of e-waste. Each intervention leads to a range of impacts and implications that should be evaluated using the evaluation framework in the digital society guide, pp.40–41.

In the examination, candidates will be provided with a source booklet containing four sources that provide information relating to a scenario.

### **25 About the interventions**

#### **Intervention 1: Recycling of e-waste**

Recycling companies coordinate the collection of e-waste and recover valuable components that can be reused.

#### **Intervention 2: Reconditioning of electronic devices**

- 30 Not-for-profit organizations collect and recondition obsolete hardware to sell on the second-hand market or donate to organizations in less economically developed countries (LEDCs).

#### **About the stakeholders**

These interventions should be considered from the perspectives of different stakeholders. The stakeholders in this global challenge include:

- 35 • donors and recipients of the second-hand hardware
- hardware manufacturers
- recycling companies
- not-for-profit organizations that collect and recondition hardware.

## **Additional terminology**

Circular economy  
Ethical consumerism  
Less economically developed countries (LEDCs)  
More economically developed countries (MEDCs)  
Obsolete hardware  
Reconditioning  
Recycling  
Responsible disposal of electronic waste (e-waste)  
Re-use  
Vision for environmental sustainability (green credentials)  
Waste mitigation strategies

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