

Directions: *There are 2 passages in this section. Each passage is followed by some questions or unfinished statements. For each of them there are four choices marked A), B), C) and D). You should decide on the best choice and mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

Passage Two

Questions 51 to 55 are based on the following passage.

Degradation of the world's natural resources by humans is rapidly outpacing the planet's ability to absorb the damage, a recent UN environmental study has found. The study concludes that without radical action the level of prosperity that millions of people in the developed world count on will be impossible to maintain or extend to poorer countries.

Water scarcity is the curse of some of the poorest regions on Earth, leaving developing countries increasingly unable to feed themselves, and causing hardship for millions of people. There appears little prospect of this desperate situation being remedied without radical action being taken. Water resources are under increasing threat from population growth, climate change, rapid urbanization, rising levels of consumption, and the degradation of lands that previously provided a natural replenishment(补充) of water resources.

The rate of damage to the natural environment was found to increase globally, despite concerted efforts to persuade government to take measures to improve the condition. "If current trends continue, and the world fails to improve patterns of production and consumption, then the state of the world's environment will continue to decline," warned UN executive director Achim Steiner.

He said the tools for improving the environment for millions of people existed in developed countries, but were in danger of not being used.

The study found that basic measures to tackle some of the key causes of environmental damage were still not being taken. These included measures to reduce air pollution; to control the damage to marine ecosystems, which can have a huge effect on fish stocks on which hundreds of millions of people depend; and to curb the degradation of land where modern agricultural methods were pursued without regard to the longer-term consequences.

Despite the recent global agreement on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, global carbon output continues to rise. This will put a long-term strain on the ability of developing economies to feed their own people. Climate change is aggravated by the emissions of greenhouse gases from chemical and natural fertilisers used in agriculture which increased by more than a quarter between 2000 and 2010. Other problem areas identified in the report included glaciers, which provide vital water resources for millions of people, but which are shrinking as the climate warms.

In rich countries, these problems have built up over decades and centuries while economic growth was pursued at the expense of the environment. Subsequent efforts to remedy the environment have met with partial success. But in developing countries, the path of future development has more potential to change, which has encouraged international institutions to devise more sustainable growth pathways that are supposed both to alleviate poverty and preserve the environment.

51. What is the major finding of the UN environmental study?
- A) Human activity has rendered Mother Earth almost uninhabitable.
 - B) Humans are doing more damage to the earth than it can cope with.
 - C) Environmental problems have considerably weakened human prosperity.
 - D) Environmental damage is more serious in developed countries these days.
52. What is said about water scarcity in some of the poorest regions?
- A) It is getting so serious that there is little hope of solution.
 - B) It largely accounts for their slow economic development.
 - C) It can hardly be relieved if no drastic measures are taken.
 - D) It is primarily caused by the acceleration of climate change.
53. What does Achim Steiner say about the environmental condition?
- A) It will deteriorate worldwide.
 - B) It is attracting global attention.
 - C) It is being slowly remedied globally.
 - D) It will shrink the world's population.
54. What is the dilemma developing countries face?
- A) They cannot modernise farming without causing land degradation.
 - B) They cannot promote industrialisation without polluting waterways.
 - C) They cannot boost crop yields without causing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - D) They cannot catch up with rich countries without sacrificing the environment.
55. What should developing countries do in their future development according to the passage?
- A) They turn to developed countries for the assistance they need.
 - B) They remedy environmental damage by slowing economic growth.
 - C) They avoid damaging interference from international institutions.
 - D) They improve people's livelihood without harming the environment.