The Management University of Africa

Sponsored by the Kenya Institute of Management

POST GRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

MDS 512: ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

DATE: 8TH APRIL 2026

DURATION: 3 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 60

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **FOUR (4)** questions.
4. Question **ONE is compulsory.**
5. Answer any other **TWO** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **30 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided**

QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

THE AURORA BASIN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Aurora Basin is a vast, ecologically sensitive region spanning three countries at different stages of economic development. The basin contains tropical forests, wetlands, and major river systems that support biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and the livelihoods of over twelve million people. Despite its ecological importance, the region is characterized by persistent poverty, limited infrastructure, and high dependence on natural resource–based livelihoods. In response, governments within the basin have adopted a coordinated Sustainable Development Initiative aimed at accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving regional integration.

The development strategy prioritizes large-scale extractive industries, hydropower generation, commercial agriculture, and transport infrastructure. These interventions are promoted as essential for employment creation, foreign exchange earnings, and poverty reduction. While macroeconomic indicators show modest improvement, environmental degradation has intensified. Deforestation, water pollution, soil erosion, toxic waste accumulation, and ecosystem fragmentation are increasingly evident. Climate variability has further heightened vulnerability, particularly among rural and indigenous communities whose livelihoods depend directly on ecosystem services.

Consumption patterns within the basin reveal stark inequalities. Urban elites and industrial actors display consumption and waste-generation behaviors comparable to those in developed economies, while rural populations experience declining access to clean water, fertile land, and forest resources. Poverty reduction gains remain uneven, raising concerns about the sustainability and inclusiveness of prevailing development models. Critics argue that the initiative reflects a growth-

oriented paradigm that undervalues environmental limits and social equity.

Environmental governance frameworks exist across the basin, including environmental laws, regulatory agencies, and impact assessment requirements. However, institutional capacity and coordination remain weak. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are legally mandated for major projects but are often conducted late in the project cycle, with limited consideration of cumulative impacts. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been proposed as a planning tool for basin-wide policies and programs, yet its application remains fragmented and politically contested. Quality control mechanisms for environmental assessments are underdeveloped, resulting in variable standards and limited enforcement.

Community participation is formally recognized in policy frameworks, but in practice, engagement is often consultative rather than deliberative. Local communities report limited influence over project design and decision-making, fueling conflict and undermining trust in public institutions. Participatory and community-based approaches are increasingly advocated by civil society organizations as mechanisms for improving environmental outcomes and social legitimacy. Private sector involvement in the Aurora Basin is dominated by multinational corporations operating under global market pressures. Many firms publish Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and environmental reports aligned with international standards such as the Triple Bottom Line. However, critics argue that reporting often prioritizes reputational management over substantive environmental performance. Adoption of cleaner production, pollution prevention, eco-efficiency, waste minimization, toxics use reduction, and green productivity practices varies widely across sectors.

Market-based instruments have been introduced as part of the sustainability agenda. Pilot carbon credit trading schemes linked to forest conservation and renewable energy projects are underway,

supported by international donors. While these initiatives promise financial incentives for environmental protection, concerns persist regarding equity, transparency, additionality, and long-term effectiveness. At the normative level, policymakers claim adherence to principles articulated at the Rio Earth Summit, including sustainable development, precaution, intergenerational equity, and stakeholder participation. Nevertheless, debates continue regarding the adequacy of the Rio agenda in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, globalized consumption, and technological transformation. Environmental ethics perspectives increasingly shape these debates, highlighting tensions between anthropocentric, ecocentric, and justice-based approaches to development in the Aurora Basin.

Required:

a) Analyze and critique the interaction between environmental degradation, poverty, development pathways, and consumption patterns shaping sustainability outcomes in the Aurora Basin.

(12 marks)

b) Evaluate the performance of environmental management and governance systems, including legal and institutional frameworks, community participation, EIA, SEA, and quality control mechanisms, in addressing cumulative and strategic impacts.

(10 marks)

c) Design and defend a comprehensive policy and corporate response framework incorporating environmental ethics, cleaner production and technology, CSR reporting, stakeholder dialogue, and market-based instruments aligned with contemporary global sustainability priorities. **(8 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

a) Compare and contrast consumption and sustainability patterns in developed and developing countries, highlighting their global environmental implications.

(8 marks)

b) Assess how these patterns shape international environmental governance and development policy.

(7 marks)

QUESTION THREE

a) Examine the evolution, objectives, and best-practice principles of Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. **(8 marks)**

b) Evaluate the role of quality control and institutional capacity in improving the performance of environmental assessment systems.

(7 marks)

QUESTION FOUR

a) Critically appraise the effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility reporting, including the Triple Bottom Line and stakeholder dialogue, in promoting sustainable development.

(8 marks)

b) Analyze the ethical, economic, and environmental implications of carbon credit trading as a global market-based instrument.

(7 marks)