

**Epreuve du 1<sup>er</sup> groupe****A N G L A I S****A BROKE NATION**

Eritrea's unpopularity among its Horn of Africa neighbours has meant bad news for its businessmen and economy. With borders to potential trade partners Ethiopia and Sudan closed due to ongoing political tensions, prices have been rising and key goods often in short supply.

5 Internally, relations between the government and the private sector have worsened with access to foreign exchange tightly controlled and new proclamations issued to try and curb inflation, running at around 30 per cent.

10 At the heart of Eritrea's economic problems is the stark fact that it has few goods that the rest of the world wants. Exports are worth about US\$1 million a month compared to imports over US \$30 million. With such a high demand for foreign goods, the government is continually struggling to find hard currency. A fixed exchange rate of 13.5 Nafka per US dollar is in place but the black market rate is over 22 Nafka per dollar.

15 The government's response to the trade inequality has been to restrict the private sector's access to foreign currency and introduce import restrictions. Anyone attempting to bring in goods now has to prove where he got the hard currency from. "It's impossible to do business here," the owner of a small electronics said. "Even if we can somehow get the foreign exchange and the import permits, the government taxes us as if we've used the official exchange rate. Our entire profit goes."

The relationship between the independent business community and the government is poor. In August, Trade and Industry Minister, Giorgis Teklemichael, denounced the business sector for "unjustifiably selling commodities at higher prices, thus rendering free market policy unworkable".

20 Basic goods are now supposed to be sold at fixed prices. However, prices have risen markedly over the past year. The price of *teff* used to make Eritrea's staple diet *injera*, has almost tripled.

The economy is kept afloat by the money the government receives from Eritreans working abroad. Last year it amounted to almost US \$300 million, a figure that dwarfs the country's earnings.

25 It is not surprising that the government is going out of its way to keep in touch with Eritreans abroad. State television and radio are now available in North America and Europe via satellite.

An article from *BBC Focus on Africa*,  
October-December 2004, page 09

**I - COMPREHENSION**

I. Short answer questions

(1.5 mark)

*Read the text and answer these questions:*

- 1. What is the main economic problem in Eritrea?
- 2. Why does the Eritrean government continually need hard currency ?
- 3. How does the Eritrean government keep its economy out of debt?

**II - TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS**

(2 marks)

*Say whether statements are true or false by quoting from the text:*

- 4. Basic goods are sold at fixed prices in Eritrea.
- 5. Eritrea has normal economic relationships with Ethiopia and Sudan.
- 6. The Eritrean government has good relations with the country's private sector.
- 7. Eritrean business people are accused of raising prices without any acceptable reason.

**III – TABLE COMPLETION : Read the text and list the phrases below in the correct column of the table.**

(1.5 mark)

- a) restriction of imports
- b) few goods to exports
- c) relations with the private sector
- d) relations with nationals working abroad
- e) relations with neighbouring countries
- f) access to foreign currency

Problems	Solutions
8. ....	9. ....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

**IV - OPPOSITES**

(1 mark)

*Find in the text the opposites of these words :*

- 10. Domestic:..... ; 11. To free:.....

**V - INFORMATION TRANSFER**

(02 marks)

*Read the text and fill in this table about Eritrea :*

Currency	Prices of basic goods	Government's solutions to trade inequality
12 .....	13 .....	14 .....
		15 .....

**VI - SUMMARY CLOZE**

(02 marks)

*Fill in the gaps in this passage with words or phrases from the text:*

The disagreement between Eritrea and its neighbouring countries have negative consequences on its economy. The Eritrean government has bad (16.) ..... with the private sector because of the measures it has taken to stop (17.) ..... The business community cannot have an easy access to (18.) ..... and the prices of (19.) ..... have risen considerably.

**VII - LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE**

**Transformation**

**(03 marks)**

*Transform these sentences, beginning with the prompts:*

20. The business community was accused by the Eritrean government of selling goods at higher prices.  
The Eritrean government. ....

21. Eritrea can export few goods only to the rest of the world.  
Only few goods.....

22. Basic goods are not sold at fixed prices ; so prices have considerably risen recently.  
If basic goods.....

23. You won't pass your exam if you don't work hard.  
Unless you.....

24. The borders with neighbouring countries were closed, so prices rose markedly.  
If the borders.....

25. I have advised him to work hard, but he keeps neglecting his studies.  
Despite.....

**VIII - COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING:**

Who ; which ; whom ; whose ; what ; that.

**(02 marks)**

26 Exporters, most of .....send goods by sea, accept cash against documents.

27. The importers.....have paid cash will receive their goods earlier than the others.

28. Most of our customers,.....are fond of imported goods, will be satisfied.

29. The customers, ..... goods are being delivered to their warehouse, have already paid.

**IX - PUT THE VERB IN BRACKETS IN THE RIGHT TENSE**

**(1 mark)**

30 If you (sign) ..... the cheque, you would have been paid.

31 It's high time you (perform) ..... the task.

**X- ESSAY**

**(4 marks)**

a) Do you think that it is safe for Eritrea to depend on money sent by Eritreans working abroad ? Why or why not ? Give your reasons in about 150 words.

b) Your government is blaming its private sector for making too much money and is threatening to increase taxes on imported goods. Write an article of about 150 words in which you advise the government on the importance of the private sector and the potential consequences of tax increases.

**KEY TO ANSWERS**

**I. SAQS (1.5 marks)**

1. It has few goods that the rest of the world wants.
2. Because the demand for foreign goods is very high.
3. Through the money the government receives from Eritreans working hard.

**II. True/False Questions (2marks)**

4. False: “ ..... prices have risen markedly over the past years”.
5. False: “ with borders ..... Closed”.
6. False: “relations .....have worsened”.
7. True: “Trade and Industry Ministry, Giorgis Teklemichael denounced the business sector "unjustifiably selling commodities at higher prices”.

**III. TABLE COMPLETION (1.5 marks)**

Problems	Solutions
8. b)	9. a)
c)	d)
e)	
f)	

**IV. Opposites (1 mark)**

10. foreign
11. to restrict

**V. Information transfer (2 marks)**

12. Nafka
13. high
14. restricting the private sector's access to foreign currency
15. introducing import restrictions

**VI Summary cloze (2marks):**

16. relations
17. inflation
18. foreign currency
19. basic goods

**VII. Transformation (3 marks)**

20. The government accused the business community of selling goods at higher prices.
21. Only few goods can be exported to the rest of the world.
22. If basic goods were sold at fixed prices, prices would not considerably have risen recently.
23. Unless you work hard, you won't pass your exam.
24. If the borders had not been closed, prices would not have risen markedly.
25. Despite the fact that I have advised him to work he keeps neglecting his studies.

**VIII. Completion**

- |          |                 |                  |
|----------|-----------------|------------------|
| 26. whom | 27. that or who | <b>(2 marks)</b> |
| 28. who  | 29. whose       |                  |

**IX. Right verb tense.**

- |                |               |                 |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 30. had signed | 31. performed | <b>(1 mark)</b> |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|

**X- ESSAY (4 marks)**