Corso di laurea in Scienze della Comunicazione
Insegnamento: **Lingua Inglese** (II anno)

Test di livello linguistico
- Comprensione del testo

Leggi il testo che segue e rispondi alle domande di comprensione:

Cities of the Future
Today's "Mega-cities" are overcrowded and environmentally stressed
by Divya Abhat, Shauna Dineen, Tamsyn Jones, Jim Motavalli, Rebecca Sanborn, and Kate Slomkowski

We take big cities for granted today, but they are a relatively recent phenomenon. Most of human history concerns rural people making a living from the land. But the world is rapidly urbanizing, and it's not at all clear that our planet has the resources to cope with this relentless trend. And, unfortunately, most of the growth is occurring in urban centers ill-equipped for the pace of change. You've heard of a phenomenon called "declining birth rate"? It's bypassing Dhaka, Mumbai, Mexico City and Lagos, cities that are adding population as many of their western counterparts contract.

The world's first cities grew up in what is now Iraq, on the plains of Mesopotamia near the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The first city in the world to have more than one million people was Rome at the height of its Empire in 5 A.D. At that time, world population was only 170 million. But Rome was something new in the world. It had developed its own sophisticated sanitation and traffic management systems, as well as aqueducts, multi-story low-income housing and even suburbs, but after it fell in 410 A.D. it would be 17 centuries before any metropolitan area had that many people.

The first large city in the modern era was Beijing, which surpassed one million population shortly after 1800, followed soon after by New York and London. But at that time city life was the exception; only three percent of the world's population lived in urban areas in 1800.

The rise of manufacturing spurred relocation to urban centers from the 19th until the early 20th century. The cities had jobs to offer, and new arrivals from the countryside provided the factories with cheap, plentiful labor. But the cities were also unhealthy places to live because of crowded conditions, poor sanitation and the rapid transmission of infectious disease. As the Population Reference Bureau reports, deaths exceeded births in many large European cities until the middle of the 19th century. Populations grew, by continuing waves of migration from the countryside and from abroad.

From First World to Third
In the first half of the 20th century, the fastest urban growth was in western cities. New York, London and other First World capitals were magnets for immigration and job opportunity. In 1950, New York, London, Tokyo and Paris boasted of having the world's largest metropolitan populations. (Also in the top 10 were Moscow, Chicago and the German city of Essen.) By then, New York had already become the first "mega-city," with more than 10 million people. It would not hold on to such an exclusive title for long.

In the postwar period, many large American cities lost population as manufacturing

moved overseas and soldiers returning from the war took advantage of federal aid and set up home in suburban areas. Crime was also a factor. As an example, riot-torn Detroit lost 800,000 people between 1950 and 1996, and its population declined 33.9 percent between 1970 and 1996. Midwestern cities were particularly hard-hit. St. Louis, for instance, lost more than half its population in the same period, as did Pittsburgh. Cleveland precipitously declined, as did Buffalo, Cincinnati, Minneapolis and many other large cities, emerging as regional players rather than world leaders.

Meanwhile, while many American cities shrank, population around the world was growing dramatically. In the 20th century, world population increased from 1.65 billion to six billion. The highest rate of growth was in the late 1960s, when 80 million people were added every year.

According to the "World Population Data Sheet," global population will rise 46 percent between now and 2050 to about nine billion. While developed countries are losing population because of falling birth rates and carefully controlled immigration rates (only the US reverses this trend, with 45 percent growth to 422 million predicted by 2050), population is exploding in the developing world.

India's population will likely grow 52 percent to 1.6 billion by 2050, when it will surpass China as the world's most populous country. The population in neighboring Pakistan will grow to 349 million, up 134 percent by 2050. Triple-digit growth rates also are forecast for Iraq, Afghanistan and Nepal.

Africa could double in population to 1.9 billion by 2050. These growth rates hold despite the world's highest rates of AIDS infection, and despite civil wars, famines and other factors. Despite strife in the Congo, it could triple to 181 million by 2050, while Nigeria doubles to 307 million.

Big Cities Get Bigger—and Poorer

According to a 1994 UN report, 1.7 billion of the world's 2.5 billion urban dwellers were then living in less-developed nations, which were also home to two thirds of the world's mega-cities. The trend is rapidly accelerating. *People and the Planet* reports that by 2007, 3.2 billion people—a number larger than the entire global population of 1967—will live in cities. Developing countries will absorb nearly all of the world's population increases between today and 2030. The estimated urban growth rate of 1.8 percent for the period between 2000 and 2030 will double the number of city dwellers. Meanwhile, rural populations are growing scarcely at all.

Also by 2030, more than half of all Asians and Africans will live in urban areas. Latin America and the Caribbean will at that time be 84 percent urban, a level comparable to the US As urban population grows, rural populations will shrink. Asia is projected to lose 26 million rural dwellers between 2000 and 2030.

For many internal migrants, cities offer more hope of a job and better health care and educational opportunities. In many cases, they are home to an overwhelming percentage of a country's wealth. (Mexico City, for example, produces about 30 percent of Mexico's total Gross Domestic Product.) Marina Lupina, a Manila (Philippines) resident, told People and the Planet that she and her two children endure the conditions of city living (inhabiting a shack made from discarded wood and cardboard next to a fetid, refuse-choked canal) because she can earn $2 to $3 a day selling recycled cloth, compared to 50 cents as a farm laborer in the rural areas. "My girls will have a better life than I had," she says. "That's the main reason I came to Manila. We

will stay no matter what."

Movement like this will lead to rapidly changing population levels in the world's cities, and emerging giants whose future preeminence can now only be guessed. "By 2050, an estimated two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas, imposing even more pressure on the space infrastructure and resources of cities, leading to social disintegration and horrific urban poverty," says Werner Fornos, president of the Washington-based Population Institute.

Today, the most populous city is Tokyo (26.5 million people in 2001), followed by Sao Paulo (18.3 million), Mexico City (18.3 million), New York (16.8 million) and Bombay/Mumbai (16.5 million). But by 2015 this list will change, with Tokyo remaining the largest city (then with 27.2 million), followed by Dhaka (Bangladesh), Mumbai, Sao Paulo, New Delhi and Mexico City (each with more than 20 million). New York will have moved down to seventh place, followed by Jakarta, Calcutta, Karachi and Lagos (all with more than 16 million).

The speed by which some mega-cities are growing has slowed. Thirty years ago, for instance, the UN projected Mexico City's population would grow beyond 30 million by 2000, but the actual figures are much lower. Other cities not growing as much as earlier seen are Rio de Janeiro, Calcutta, Cairo and Seoul (South Korea). But against this development is the very rapid growth of many other cities (in some cases, tenfold in 40 years) such as Amman (Jordan), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Lagos and Nairobi.

The rise of mega-cities, comments the Washington Post, "poses formidable challenges in health care and the environment, in both the developed and developing world. The urban poor in developing countries live in squalor unlike anything they left behind… In Caracas, more than half the total housing stock is squatter housing. In Bangkok, the regional economy is 2.1 percent smaller than it otherwise would be because of time lost in traffic jams. The mega-cities of the future pose huge problems for waste management, water use and climate change."

In Cairo the rooftops of countless buildings are crowded with makeshift tents, shacks and mud shelters. It's not uncommon to see a family cooking their breakfast over an open fire while businesspeople work in their cubicles below. The city's housing shortage is so severe that thousands of Egyptians have moved into the massive historic cemetery known as the City of the Dead, where they hang clotheslines between tombs and sleep in mausoleums.

By 2015, there will be 33 mega-cities, 27 of them in the developing world. Although cities themselves occupy only two percent of the world's land, they have a major environmental impact on a much wider area. London, for example, requires roughly 60 times its own area to supply its nine million inhabitants with food and forest products. Mega-cities are likely to be a drain on the Earth's dwindling resources, while contributing mightily to environmental degradation themselves.

The Mega-city Environment

Mega-cities suffer from a catalogue of environmental ills. A World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) study found that seven of the cities — Mexico City, Beijing, Cairo, Jakarta, Los Angeles, Sao Paulo and Moscow — had three or more pollutants that exceeded the WHO health protection guidelines. All 20 of the cities studied by WHO/UNEP had at least one major pollutant that exceeded established health limits.

According to the World Resources Institute, "Millions of children living in the world's largest cities, particularly in developing countries, are exposed to life-threatening air pollution two to eight times above the maximum WHO guidelines. Indeed, more than 80 percent of all

deaths in developing countries attributable to air pollution-induced lung infections are among children under five." In the big Asian mega-cities such as New Delhi, Beijing and Jakarta, approximately 20 to 30 percent of all respiratory disease stems from air pollution.

Almost all of the mega-cities face major fresh water challenges. Johannesburg, South Africa is forced to draw water from highlands 370 miles away. In Bangkok, saltwater is making incursions into aquifers. Mexico City has a serious sinking problem because of excessive groundwater withdrawal.

More than a billion people, 20 percent of the world's population, live without regular access to clean running water. While poor people are forced to pay exorbitant fees for private water, many cities squander their resources through leakages and illegal drainage. "With the population of cities expected to increase to five billion by 2025," says Klaus Toepfer, executive director of the UNEP, "the urban demand for water is set to increase exponentially. This means that any solution to the water crisis is closely linked to the governance of cities."

Mega-city residents, crowded into unsanitary slums, are also subject to serious disease outbreaks. Lima, Peru (with population estimated at 9.4 million by 2015) suffered a cholera outbreak in the late 1990s partly because, as the New York Times reported, "Rural people new to Lima…live in houses without running water and use the outhouses that dot the hillsides above." Consumption of unsafe food and water subjects these people to life-threatening diarrhea and dehydration.

It's worth looking at some of these emerging mega-cities in detail, because daily life there is likely to be the pattern for a majority of the world's population. Most are already experiencing severe environmental problems that will only be exacerbated by rapid population increases.

Per ciascuna domanda, scegli la risposta migliore tra le tre fornite:

1. **In the postwar period many major US cities have experienced population decline. The reason for this is:**
1.1   Crime has increased in urban areas, obliging many people to move out of the city.
1.2   Many industries have closed down, reducing the amount of employment on offer.
1.3   Both the above factors together.

2. **According to the text, the first mega-city (or megacities) of the modern (19th century and later) world was/were:**
2.1   New York.
2.2   London & Tokyo.
2.3   Beijing.

3. **In the 19th century many large cities (in what is now the 'developed world') had rapidly increasing populations. According to the text, this population increase was due to**:
3.1   very high birth rates among the urban populations of the time.
3.2   very high birth rates among the urban populations & heavy migration from the countryside to the cities.
3.3   heavy migration from the countryside to the cities.

4. **According to the text, the mega-cities of the 'developed world' are now generally experiencing negative population growth.**
4.1   TRUE.
4.2   FALSE.
4.3   The text has nothing to say on this point.

5. **Population growth in the developed world is generally negative, but the USA is an exception. Its estimated population growth for the period to 2050 is:**
5.1   close to the average for the world as a whole.
5.2   roughly equal to that of countries in the developing world with the highest population growth.
5.3   the text has nothing to say on this point.

6. **Regarding mega-cities in the developing world, the text says:**
6.1   When cities in the developing world achieve 'mega-city status' (i.e. their populations rise to 10 million or above), population growth is effectively out of control, having developed a momentum that cannot be stopped.
6.2   When cities in the developing world achieve 'mega-city status' (i.e. their populations rise to 10 million or above), it does sometimes happen that their population growth slows

down, stops and even becomes negative.
6.3 When cities in the developing world achieve 'mega-city status' (i.e. their populations rise to 10 million or above), it normally happens that their population growth slows down, stops and even becomes negative.

7. **According to what is written in the text, when people in developing countries abandon the countryside and migrate to a large conurbation, they generally end up:**
7.1 living in conditions that are no worse than those they experienced in the countryside.
7.2 living in conditions that are considerably worse than those they experienced in the countryside.
7.3 enjoying better living conditions but at the price of having to accept terrible exploitation in the workplace.

8. **Predicted population growth for Africa is that it could double its present population by 2050, ...**
8.1 but this prediction does not take account of the likely effects of the continuing AIDS epidemic, as well as other factors (wars, famines etc).
8.2 and this prediction takes account of the likely effects of the continuing AIDS epidemic, as well as other factors (wars, famines etc).
8.3 but the text does not say whether this prediction takes account of the effects of the AIDS epidemic or not.

9. **The main concern of the text you have read could best be summarised as follows:**
9.1 'What will happen to the world when 80% (or more) of its population lives in cities?'
9.2 'What will happen in a world where the developed nations have permanently declining populations and the developing nations are experiencing constant population growth?'
9.3 'What can we do to stop urban degradation in developing nations?'

10. **The text you have read is in fact only an extract from a longer text. On the basis of the part you have read, how do you think the rest of the text (the part which you have not been given to read) will continue?**
10.1 Having considered environmental problems (water, air etc), it will move on to deal in general terms with health problems (epidemics, diet etc).
10.2 Having considered environmental problems (water, air etc) in general terms, it will go on to investigate how specific mega-cities in the devloping world are experiencing these (and other) problems.
10.3 It will change its emphasis from environmental questions to political ones (e.g. Should we expect the huge impoverished urban populations of developing countries to cause political instability?).