Gr 12 Geography

SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHY

URBAN SETTLEMENTS

4.1 The origin and development of urban settlements – urbanisation of the world's population

As soon as people found methods of producing access food, some people could start specialising in other activities like making clothes, manufacturing and rendering services. People started settling in larger clustered settlements. Today more than 50% of the world population lives in urban settlements of different sizes.
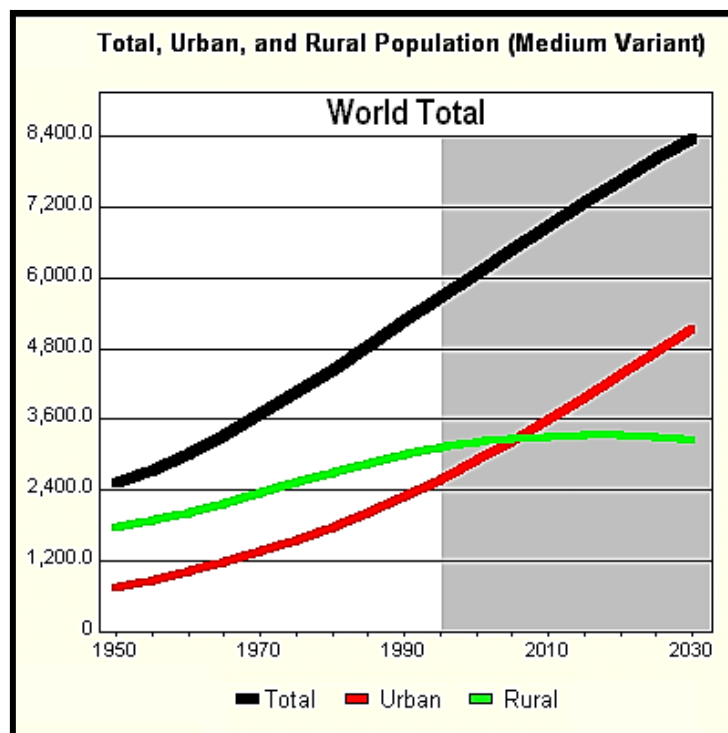
In 1800 only 5% of people were urban dwellers.

1995 – over 45% of world's population lived in urban areas.

Most MEDC's over 70% of population lives in towns and cities.

Urbanisation began as a result of the industrial revolution.

The graph below illustrates the rural and urban populations and the combined world population in millions. From the graph it is clear that the level of urban population has exceeded the rural population since 2005.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

- ✓ Urbanisation – more people live in cities
- ✓ Urban growth – number of people in cities increase
- ✓ Urban expansion – number of people and buildings increase in cities.
- ✓ Urban sprawl – uncontrolled development of cities
- ✓ Rate of urbanisation – how fast urbanisation takes place
- ✓ Level of urbanisation – percentage of total population in cities

4.2 How site and situation affect the location of urban settlements

The **site** is the actual location of a settlement on the earth and is composed of the physical characteristics of the landscape specific to the area.

PHYSICAL FACTORS:

- ✓ Availability of fresh water
- ✓ Underlying rock and soil structure
- ✓ Relief – too steep slopes makes building difficult
- ✓ Drainage – avoid flooding
- ✓ Aspect of slope – north-facing slopes in Southern Hemisphere is warmer and south-facing slopes in Northern Hemisphere is warmer
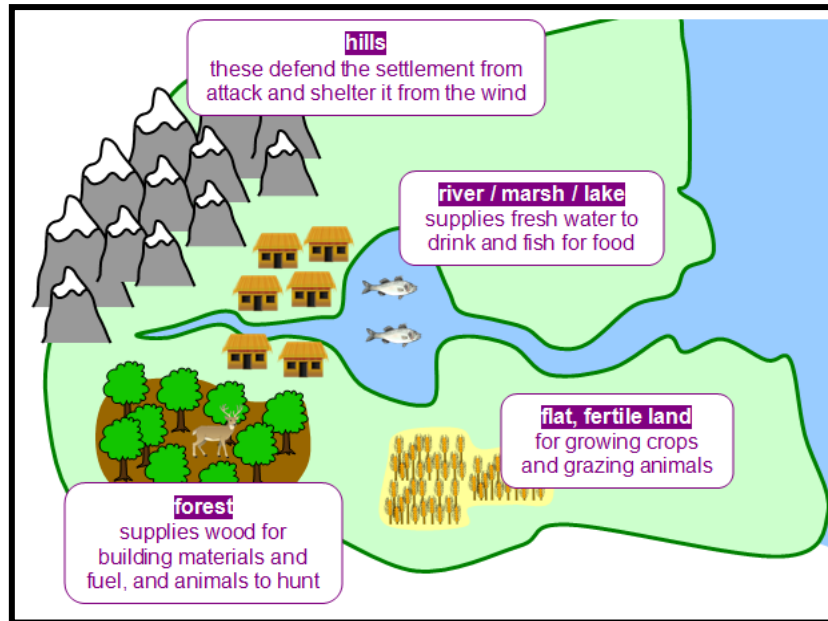- ✓ Resources – minerals will encourage industrial development.

SOCIAL FACTORS:

- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Defensibility – hill-top settlements were important
- ✓ Food supply – to support growing populations

POLITICAL FACTORS:

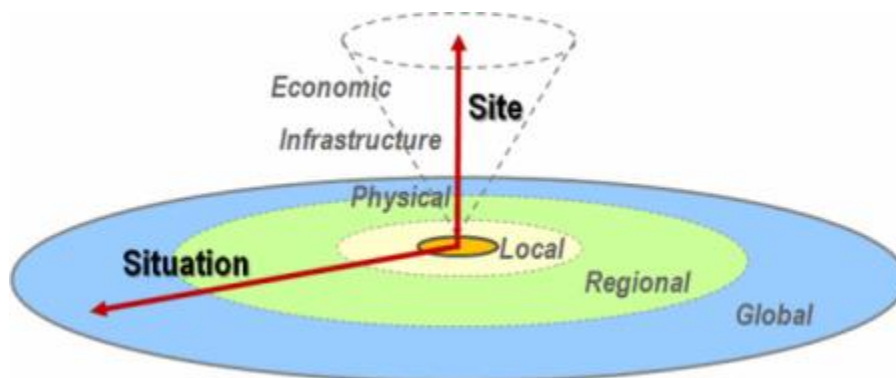- ✓ Government can decide where to create urban settlements

ECONOMIC FACTORS:

- ✓ Transport routes – nodal points (where roads and rivers meet), towns near mountain passes or ports.
- ✓ Bridging points over rivers
- ✓ Harbours – to promote trade
- ✓ Building material – for construction

Situation of a settlement is defined as the location of a place relative to its surroundings and other places. Factors included in an area's situation include the accessibility of the location, the extent of a place's connections with another, and how close an area may be to raw materials if they are not located specifically on the site.

4.3 Classification of urban settlements according to function, such as central places, trade and transport, break of bulk points, specialised cities, junction towns and gateway towns or gap towns.

All settlements perform certain functions to justify their continued existence.

1. CENTRAL PLACES:

Accessible urban settlements – provide goods and services to the surrounding population.

E.g Upington

2. TRADE AND TRANSPORT CITIES:

Urban settlements that were established due to trade and transportation. Good location for rail, road or sea transportation. Settlements around large airports called an aerotropolis contain industrial parks, warehouses, offices, houses and services.

E.g Durban developed around safe harbour. Port is well served by main roads and railway lines.

3. BREAK-OF-BULK POINTS:

Established at point where one mode of transport is changed for another and/or where the volume of goods being handled is reduced in volume, e.g places where goods are moved from ship to train or truck. Ports are good example of this.

E.g Saldanha Bay, Western Cape and Richardsbay

4. SPECIALISED CITIES:

Towns and cities that specialise in a particular activity, e.g vehicle manufacturing, information technology, tourism or mining. Settlement depend on resource, e.g iron ore (Sishen) and copper (Phalaborwa)

- ✓ **Mining towns:** most important activity is mining
- ✓ **Resort towns:** some natural attraction lead to the development of the town e.g. coastlines, warm water sources, ski resorts, springs etc.
- ✓ **Industrial towns:** the most important activity is industries. E.g. Sasolburg in SA.

E.g Phalaborwa, Sishen and Okiep

5. JUNCTION CITIES:

Urban settlements that develop at important transport junctions, e.g river crossings and railway and road junctions.

E.g De Aar in Great Karoo is a road-railway junction.

6. GATEWAY TOWNS OR GAP TOWNS:
Urban settlements located at a physical gap, such as pass through a mountain range.

E.g Worcester (Western Cape) is a gap town because it is situated on edge of the Karoo near the Hex River Pass.

WORK SHEET 4 – Settlement geography

QUESTION 1:

Give ONE word/term for each of the following descriptions. Write only the word/term next to the question number.

1.1 The position of a settlement in relation to its surrounding environment.
1.2 The piece of land on which a settlement is built.
1.3 This settlement is found in an area where water is scarce and people live close to the water supply.
1.4 A settlement that develops close to an opening through a physical barrier.
1.5 The point where one mode of transport is replaced by another.
1.6 A town that develops where there is a bridge across a river.
1.7 Uncontrolled development of cities.
1.8 Percentage of total population in cities.
1.9 Number of people in cities increase.
1.10 Increased number of people in cities.