

2. Consider the following sources:

Source A: Adapted from a report in 2016



- \* Notes:
- Plastic packaging materials is the largest category of plastic products.
  - This diagram is not drawn in exact proportion.

Source B

**Table 1: The Ranking of the Top Five Countries/ Regions that Cumulatively Imported the Highest Amount of Plastic Waste (1988-2016) (percentage of the weight of global imports of plastic waste)**

Rank	Country/ Region	Income Level	%
1	China	Middle	45.1
2	Hong Kong	High	27.3
3	United States	High	3.6
4	Netherlands	High	2.7
5	Germany	High	2.3

**Table 2: The Ranking of the Top Five Countries/ Regions that Exported the Highest Amount of Plastic Waste to China in 2016 (percentage of the weight of total plastic waste imports to China)**

Rank	Country/ Region	Income Level	%
1	Hong Kong	High	24.9
2	Japan	High	11.8
3	United States	High	9.7
4	Thailand	Middle	6.1
5	Germany	High	5.5

Source C: Adapted from news reports dated 12 February and 6 July 2018

In January 2018, the Chinese government banned the importation of foreign waste, including some plastic scraps. Earlier investigations on the mainland had found widespread mixing of toxic materials with imported scrap plastic, and some recycling companies dumping imports in landfill sites.

Since it has been cheaper to export plastic waste than to dispose of it locally, some western companies have been scrambling for alternative markets in countries which still allow the import of plastic waste after the importation ban imposed by China. However, Thailand also banned the importation of plastic waste in July 2018, while Malaysia is considering implementing similar measures.

Besides, the European Commission's Plastics Strategy, which was unveiled in January 2018, says its drive to make all plastic packaging recyclable or reusable by 2030 could create 200 000 jobs on condition that recycling capacity is significantly increased. However, recycling of plastic is very complicated due to the addition of various chemicals to manufacture plastic products. Moreover, with oil prices relatively low, it has become cheaper to produce new plastic than to buy scrap plastic for recycling.

New initiatives have been introduced in different parts of the world. For instance, Seattle is the first city in the U.S. to ban plastic straws. Alternatives to plastic straws, such as straws made of paper, pasta or bamboo, have been considered by some enterprises around the world.

- (a) From Source A, identify and elaborate on *one* concern that an environmentalist may have on the disposal of plastic packaging waste. (4 marks)
- (b) Describe *two* major features of the flow of plastic waste shown in Source B. (5 marks)
- (c) 'Bans on the import of plastic waste imposed by Asian countries will bring about positive environmental impacts at a global level.' Using the sources provided, elaborate on *one* argument supporting this claim and *one* argument opposing this claim. (8 marks)