Section 4 is a monologue about Ecological functions of the forest. Question 31 – 40.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. First I would like to say how happy I am to have this opportunity to address this committee and hopefully contribute to our country's policy
(1)..... I will start with the brief introduction to the current situation of the world's forest and then give you an overview of the various services that forests provide. By services, I mean benefits to people as well as wildlife. Until recent years,
(2)..... The rate of deforestation worldwide is outstanding. The rainforest action network estimated in 1999 that 2.4 acres, that's 1 hectare, about the size of two football fields has been lost not every day or every hour, but every second. An area larger than New York City every day or 31 million hectares a year, an area larger than Poland. Despite the efforts of environmental groups and concerned people all over the world, the rate of deforestation has increased in recent years.
(3)..... It means the loss of habitat for numerous species of plants and animals. It's a major factor in the warnings from scientists worldwide that if mankind does not change how we treat our planet, 50% of species could be extinct by the middle of this century. I'm sure you all know what **(4)**..... will mean for us humans. The loss of genetic resources will seriously threaten our food security. For example, to maintain resistance to pests and diseases, our major cereal crops, rice, corn and wheat, need to have genes introduced from wild relatives every few years. And who knows what new medicines we would be losing especially with the destruction of tropical forests which like coral reefs and wetlands are especially rich in biodiversity. And then there is global warming, a problem that threatens the very existence of civilization. But one which with the exception of some northern European countries is not treated with the urgency it deserves. Forests are important carbon sinks taking in atmospheric carbon dioxide and storing it in the wood and the soil. Moreover, they are mostly destroyed by logging and fire. Burning releases
(5).....
..... These are both major greenhouse gases. It is estimated that one third of the increasing levels of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere come from deforestation. In addition, healthy forest and the soil under them that they protect, store water when it rains and slowly release it during dry seasons. Take away the trees, you have floods in the rainy season and drought in the dry season. We have seen more and more of this in recent years, in Haiti,

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Indonesia, and China. Look at this year's devastating floods in Bangladesh due to rapid deforestation in the Himalayas and many other countries. I have mentioned protecting the soil. Most of the landslides that killed hundreds of people and thousands of houses during the hurricane that hit Haiti this year would probably not have happened
(6).....
.. Another important ecological function of forest is their role in the
(7)..... Rainfalls, some of the water moves through the soil to feed streams and rivers. The rest evaporates into the air, providing moisture for clouds and rain hundreds of kilometers down wind. Break this cycle and the people down wind have less rain for agriculture and other uses and the people downstream face a greater risk of floods. This effect is now seen very clearly in Amazon Central Africa and elsewhere. And we must not forget coral. Coral reefs are **(8).....** for countless thousands of fish and other marine species. Over 50% of these important parts, important economically, not just beautiful things to look at of the marine ecosystem, are now damaged. The main reasons are warmer sea water, chemical pollution and dynamite fishing. But eroded soil from deforested land that runs into the sea is another. Coral needs clean water to survive. Without this, they die. So does the marine life that depends on them and the fisherman end up with no fish and no income. And we must not forget the many millions of people that depend on healthy forests for their living. Many of these people, tribes in the amazons for example, **(9).....** with the forest for thousands of years. When their jungle home is destroyed, they all too often end up as marginal people in the slums of big cities. And for us, rich people, the forest environment provides us with wonderful opportunities for eco-tourism. Hiking, camping, bird watching and other outdoor activities. Before we stop for coffee, I will just say one more thing. Many studies by **(10).....** show that the free ecological services provided by a tree in an intact forest, reliable water supply, climate moderation, etcetera, are worth 20 to several hundred times as much as the wood when it **(11).....**.

That is the end of Section 4.

You now have half a minute to check your answers.

That is the end of the listening test. In the IELTS test, you will now have 10 mins to transfer your answers to the IELTS sheet.

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