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Digital society

Pre-released statement: Governance and human rights

For use in November 2025

Instructions to candidates

- Pre-released statement required for higher level paper 3.

Voting challenges for local citizens

This pre-released statement outlines the real-world nature of a challenge and interventions related to the DP digital society higher level extension. The pre-released statement should be used by candidates to plan and conduct extended inquiries in advance of paper 3.

- Challenge topic(s): Governance and human rights
- 5 • Area(s) for inquiry: Participation and representation

In addition to the information contained in this statement, candidates should also consider relevant connections to additional digital society concepts, content and contexts.

This pre-released statement will extend the concepts and content addressed at standard level. Teachers are recommended to address a number of scenarios within this context.

10 **About the challenge**

Democracy is a core value of the United Nations and helps promote human rights, peace, and security around the world. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) promotes the human right to vote and has outlined the legal, technical, and human rights aspects of elections in *Human Rights and Elections – A Handbook on International Human*
15 *Rights Standards on Elections*. Voting is one way in which citizens can express how they wish to be governed.

Voting can take place at a national or local level.

- At a national level, citizens may be voting for a political party to lead the country.
- 20 • At a local level, voting will determine who is governing a town. Citizens' votes will determine who will be in government and how local services, such as healthcare, education, roads and transport, and local amenities, will run.

Throughout history in many countries, citizens have fought hard for the right to vote. However, despite this, there are still many people who cannot or will not vote. A citizen's age, gender, education, socio-economic status, and race can influence whether they vote or not. In some
25 countries, young citizens do not vote because they feel that their vote does not matter and that there is not much that voting can do to influence the government. They do not feel empowered. In other countries, citizens are unable to travel to a voting station to place their vote.

This pre-released statement introduces two digitally based interventions designed to increase voter participation in government-held elections. Each intervention leads to a range of impacts and
30 implications that should be evaluated using the evaluation framework in the *Digital society guide*, pp.40-41.

In the examination, candidates will be provided with a source booklet containing four sources that provide information relating to a scenario.

About the interventions

35 **Intervention 1:** The government partners with a digital technology company to develop a smart phone voting app that uses blockchain technology to allow citizens to vote remotely.

Intervention 2: The government runs a social media voting awareness campaign to encourage citizens to participate in the voting process.

About the stakeholders

- 40 These interventions should be considered from the perspectives of different stakeholders. The stakeholders in this global challenge include:
- All citizens who are eligible to vote (in particular the young and the old)
 - Governments or local authorities
 - Developers of mobile phone apps
- 45 • Social media companies

Additional terminology

Blockchain

Civic engagement

Data analytics

Democracy

Echo chamber

Microtargeting

UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

Vote tampering

Voter empowerment

Notes

It is not necessary for candidates to study the United Nations' *Human Rights and Elections – A Handbook on International Human Rights Standards on Elections*. They are only required to be aware of the overarching principles behind the right to vote.
