

## **On the eve of the World Day to Stop Smoking, May 31, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issues press release about the prevalence of smoking in the Palestinian Territory**

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics describes the prevalence of smoking in the Palestinian society on the eve of the World Day to Stop Smoking, in a press release issued on Thursday, May 29, 2008. PCBS shows the most prominent data pinpointing smoking prevalence in the Palestinian society between 2000 and 2006. PCBS drew attention in the press release that it is highly concerned with the significance of the occasion, which is consistent with the dissemination policy of PCBS and its awareness of giving this issue utmost concern by making available the official figures and statistics planners and policy makers need in all topics about the health situation in the Palestinian Territory.

### **Drop in smoking prevalence rate by 10.4% between 2000 and 2006**

Data show that the prevalence rate of smoking among individuals aged 12 and above dropped by 10.4% between 2000 and 2006. The rate was 22.1% in 2000 compared to 19.8% in 2006. Data also show that the drop rate was higher in Gaza Strip in comparison with the West Bank at 20.4% and 5.9% respectively.

### **Wide gap between male and female smokers**

According to data, the rate of male smokers reached 37.0% in 2006 compared to 40.7% in 2000. On the other hand, the rate of female smokers registered 2.2% in 2006 compared to 3.2% in 2000.

### **Smokers' rates increase with age**

The 2006 data show that smoking is more prevalent among individuals aged 30 and above compared to those below 30 at 27.0% and 14.0% respectively. Data also show that 3.0% of individuals aged 12 and above were previous smokers who quit smoking and 77.0% have never smoked.

### **4.0% of smokers are aged 10-18 years**

According to 2006 data, 4.0% of smokers are within the age group of 10-18 years including 7.3% males and 0.6% female smokers. The rate is higher among West Bank children in comparison with Gaza Strip children at 5.3% and 2.1% respectively.

### **5.0% of smokers who are attending school are in basic and secondary schooling**

The data from 2006 show that approximately 5.0% of smokers who are attending school are in basic and secondary education stages, including 8.8% males and 0.7% females. Data also show that the rate of smokers in secondary education stages totaled 12.5%, including 24.5% males and 1.1% females. The prevalence rate of smoking among pupils in basic stages of education reached 1.9% including 3.5% males and 0.6% females.

### **Smoking begins at an early age**

According to 2006 data, 17.6% of unmarried youth aged 15-29 years are smokers. The median age upon starting smoking among those aged 15-29 years begins at the age of 16. Data tell us that 26.1% of those smokers started smoking between 10 and 14 years of age while 61.2% said that they had started smoking when they were between 15 and 19 years of age. On the other hand, 1.5% of those smokers started smoking before turning 10 years of age.

### **Imitating friends and curiosity are the most prominent incentives for smoking among the youth**

According to data, 44.0% of young smokers started smoking as a result of pressure from friends or as a result of imitating friends. Data also show that a similar rate of youth started smoking because of curiosity. Conversely, 13.2% of the young smokers from Gaza Strip said that psychological and family problems had made them smoke compared to 7.0% of the young West Bank smokers who started smoking for similar reasons.

### **4.2% of household expenditure out of total expenditure goes to smoking**

According to the data of the Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2007, the median household monthly expenditure on smoking is 28.1 Jordanian dinars (4.2% out of total expenditure) including 33.3 dinars in the West Bank and 18.2 dinars in Gaza Strip. On the other hand, data showed that the total value of Palestinian imports of smoke nearly reached 51 million U.S. dollars at the end of the year 2006.