

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

PCBS Issues a Press Release on the Occasion of World Water Day, March 22: The Quantity of Water Purchased From the Israeli Water Company (Mekorot) for Domestic Use in 2008 was 48 Million m³

World Water Day 2009 will be celebrated by the UN to highlight issues concerning waters that cross borders and link countries together.

The world shares the responsibility for managing trans-boundary waters for current and future generations.

The future of water resources management must be in the shared management of a large part of the water sources, but the fact is that water resources management in the Palestinian Territory is under Israeli occupation.

Palestinian Water Resources

The majority of Palestinian water resources are shared with one or more neighboring countries. There are five countries sharing in the Jordan River Basin: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian Territory, which has been subject of lengthy negotiations which lasted for decades.

The Theft of Arab and Palestinian Waters

In 1964, Israel began to use the waters of the Jordan River without taking into account the rights of the countries sharing in the Jordan River Basin, the draining of Lake Hula, and the diversion of the Jordan River. In 1967 Israel took control of the southern part of the Jordan River, to the detriment of Arab agricultural land along the sides of the river.

In 1978 Israel was able to control the waters of the Hasbani River, which feeds Lake Tiberias, and established settlements in the Palestinian Territory above the water basins in the West Bank, especially in the Jordan Valley. Israel has prevented the Palestinians from access to their additional water which was established in the Oslo II agreement, amounting to 80 million m³.

Perhaps the strangest of these actions made by Israel is that, at a time when water is withdrawn from the Palestinian Territory to provide Israeli cities, Israel sells the surplus to the Palestinians; preliminary data from the Palestinian Water Authority indicated that the amount of water purchased for domestic use from the Israeli Water Company (Mekorot) in 2008 amounted to 47.8 million m³ in the West Bank. An additional issue is the excessive depletion of groundwater in the Palestinian Territory.

Source of Public Water Network and Connection to Public Water Network

The results of the Local Community Survey 2008 indicated that 123 localities (22.9%) in the Palestinian Territory, with 177,275 persons have no public water network, all of them in the West Bank.

Regarding the main source of water, data show that 116 localities were connected to public water networks in the Palestinian Territory in 2008, and these localities obtain their water

through the Israeli (Mekorot) company with 454 thousands persons (12.1% of the total population in the Palestinian Territory).

110 of the localities connected to public water networks in the West Bank in 2008 obtain water through the Israeli (Mekorot) company, while 112 of the localities connected to the public network in the West Bank obtain water through the West Bank Water Department. However in Gaza Strip, 17 of the localities connected to the public network obtain water through wells, and only 6 localities obtain water through the Israeli (Mekorot) company.

The results indicated that 157 localities in the Palestinian Territory depend on underground water wells as an alternative to the public water network. 421 localities in the Palestinian Territory depend on rainwater collecting wells as an alternative to the public water network.

The results of the Household Environment Survey 2008 showed that 88.2% of the households in the Palestinian Territory live in housing units connected to the water network (84.2% in the West Bank, and 97.0% in Gaza Strip). This indicates that the percentage of households in the Palestinian Territory live in housing units connected to water network has increased compared to 84.8% in 1999. During 2008, 5.9% of the households in the Palestinian Territory depended on household water wells as a main water source.

Household Water Quality

Data of the 2008 survey revealed that 45.6% of the households in the Palestinian Territory consider the water quality as good. This percentage was higher in the West Bank at 64.3%, compared to Gaza Strip at 13.8%, the results indicate that a decreasing percentage of households in the Palestinian Territory consider the water quality as good: in 1999 67.5% considered the quality to be good.

Daily Allocation Per Capita of the Supplied Water For Domestic Use

According to the Water Statistics Report 2007 the annual available water quantity in the Palestinian Territory was 335.4 million m³ in 2007. Data also show that the quantity of water supplied for domestic use in the Palestinian Territory was 175.6 million m³ in 2007, and that the daily allocation per capita of the supplied water for domestic use in the Palestinian Territory was 135.8 (liter/capita/day). It reached only 46.6 (liter/capita/day) in Tubas Governorate.