

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

PCBS Issues a Press Release on World Environment Day, 05/06/2006

“The Palestinian Environment on World Environment Day”

2,728 tons of household solid waste are produced daily by the Palestinian households in the Palestinian Territory

The world celebrates World Environment Day every year on June 5. In 1972, the United Nations (UN) designated this day as World Environment Day at the opening of the Stockholm conference on the human environment. Also on this day, the UN confirmed the decision of establishing the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and gave it the responsibility of celebrating this day as a way to increase world attention on issues facing the environment and to inform the public of its role in environmental protection.

The Environment Status in the Palestinian Territory

Data bases of PCBS show the reality and status of the Palestinian environment based on surveys (of households and establishments) and the administrative records of the Palestinian establishments.

Estimations of PCBS show that the population density in the Palestinian Territory will reach 646 persons/km² in mid 2006: 432 persons/km² in the West Bank and 3,956 persons/km² in the Gaza Strip. Results show that the agricultural land of the Palestinian Territory is mainly comprised of land cultivated with permanent crops, which constituted 77.5% of the total agricultural land in 2004.

In 2005, about 69% of the localities have a water network, of which 121 localities (29%) obtain water from Mekorot and 184 localities do not have a water network (31%).

The data of 2005 show that 184 localities in the Palestinian Territory do not have a public water network (31% of total localities, and 220,763 persons), which represent about 6.0% of the total population in the Palestinian Territory. The main source of water for the localities connected to the network was the Israeli source (Mekorot) (for 29% of the localities connected to a water network).

Concerning households results show that 90.5% of households in the Palestinian Territory in 2005 are living in housing units connected to a public water network, distributed by region as 86.7% of households in the West Bank, and 97.9% of households in Gaza Strip. Results show that 5.4% of households in the Palestinian Territory depend on household water wells. The quality of water is varied between good and bad. Results show that 54.0% of households in the Palestinian Territory consider the water quality to be good; this percentage increases to 81.3% in the West Bank, and decreases to 6.2% in Gaza Strip. In the Palestinian Territory 32.8% of households consider the water quality to be fairly good, whereas 13.2% of households in Palestinian Territory consider it to be bad quality.

In 2005 around 12% of the localities in the Palestinian Territory were connected to a wastewater network.

Results of the Local Community Survey for 2005 show that 74 localities in the Palestinian Territory were connected to a wastewater network, of which 55 were in the West Bank. Also, 533 localities were using porous cesspits to dispose their wastewater (509 localities in the West Bank and 24 in Gaza Strip).

A wastewater network was used to dispose wastewater by 44.7% of the households in the Palestinian Territory in 2005, and 67.9% of the economic establishments in 2004.

27.8% of the localities in the Palestinian Territory did not have a solid waste collection service.

Municipal waste is the solid waste produced from the Palestinian localities. In 2005 data of the Local Community Survey show that 166 localities (28% of the localities) in the Palestinian Territory did not have a solid waste collection service. The local authority was responsible for the collection of the solid waste in 56.7% of the localities. Results also show that 129 localities in the Palestinian Territory collect their solid waste daily, whereas solid waste is collected more than once a week in 266 localities.

164 dumping sites serve 598 localities in the Palestinian Territory.

The number of dumping sites in the Palestinian Territory was 164 in 2005, of which 161 are in the West Bank and 3 are in the Gaza Strip. None of these dumping sites are monitored by the Ministry of Health. Dumping sites are considered to be sources of insects for 272 localities in the Palestinian Territory and sources of bad smell for 258 localities.

2,728 tons of household solid waste are produced daily in the Palestinian Territory.

The estimated daily amount of household solid waste produced in the Palestinian Territory was 2,728 tons. The average daily household production of waste in the Palestinian Territory was estimated to be 4.6 kg: 4.4 kg in the West Bank and 5.0 kg in Gaza Strip. The estimated monthly amount of medical wastes produced from the health care centers was about 860.3 tons.

Monthly Amount of Solid Waste Produced, by Region, Sector and Reference Period (Tons)

Region	Sector		
	Household 2005	Economic establishments 2004	Health care centers 2005
Palestinian Territory	81,849.0	85,494.6	860.3
West Bank	51,663.0	75,829.9	605.7
West Bank - North	22,953.0	27,276.7	-
West Bank - Center	16,701.0	41,654.4	-
West Bank - South	12,009.0	6,898.8	-
Gaza Strip	30,186.0	9,664.7	254.6

The total amount of green house emissions in the Palestinian Territory from all sources was estimated around 2,456.5 thousand tons during 2003, whereas the total amount of emissions from the non methane volatile organic compounds NMVOC was 14,436 tons. Amounts of emissions were distributed from many sources; energy was the most important source of emissions.

The Effect of the Israeli Measures on the Palestinian Environment

The Israeli occupation's intention had been to destroy the Palestinian environment and deplete the Palestinian Natural resources. This was clear from the first military decision that was taken after the Palestinian Territory occupation in 1967 which concerned water. The decision was taken on 07/06/1967 concerning transferring the responsibility for water in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Israeli Military Governor. This decision was followed by other decisions to restrict and decrease the Palestinian usage of their water rights and prohibit Palestinians from digging agricultural and household wells. In addition to these decisions, there were many decisions to allow the digging of wells in the colonies that are established on the West Bank and Gaza Strip lands in order to provide Israel with water from the Palestinian aquifer.

From the beginning of the occupation, more than one million trees and one million dunums of agricultural lands were destroyed and more than 288 artesian wells and additional water resources were deliberately polluted. Today Israel is controlling more than 85% of the Palestinian water resources, and because of that, Palestinian per capita drinking water decreased to less than 90 cubic meters per year.

During the last four years Israel established and began building the Annexation and Expansion Wall on West Bank lands. The wall was started in 2002, and extends inside the West Bank more than 400 meters in some areas. This wall will confiscate, close, and isolate huge areas of land (349,000 dunums), beside destroying and isolating more than 90 wells in the West Bank and a large number of springs.

After investigating the position of the Annexation and Expansion wall and the topography of the lands which the wall is built on, we found that the isolated area behind the western wall is located over the Northern and Western aquifers which have an annual discharge capacity of 507 million cubic meters, whereas the entire eastern isolated area is located over the eastern aquifer which have an annual discharge capacity of only 172 million cubic meters. Water is extracted from these aquifers by pumping from artesian wells or from the natural discharge of springs. The number of artesian wells in these two areas is estimated to be 165 wells with an

annual discharge capacity of 33 million cubic meters, and the number of springs is estimated to be 53 springs with an annual discharge capacity of 22 million cubic meters. The water extracted from wells and springs in the isolated and confiscated area is used for human, agricultural, industrial and tourism activities. However, the localities inside this area do not benefit from this water, since the water is transported and used in the areas and localities behind the wall. That is to say, Israel is stealing a huge percentage of the Palestinian natural resources.