

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
Press Release in the Occasion of World Food Day, 21 November, 2006

The main aim of any country is to provide their people at all time and have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, this will lead to achieve the whole world aim of reducing the number of food insecure people which reach about 852 million according to the last statistics of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

From September 2000 and during five years, numerous checkpoints, earth mounds and road blocks have restricted internal movement in West Bank- Gaza Strip, sea and land access is controlled by the Israeli Defense Forces. Frequent closure of crossing borders have dramatically reduced overall trade particularly food imports and exports, all of these procedures are directly and indirectly affect Palestinian people life and their source of income.

The unemployment rates reached about (24.2%) in the third quarter of 2006. The mobility of the Palestinian labour force into Israel is increasingly restricted. The percentage of employee in Israel and Settlement decreased from 22.1 in the third quarter of 2000 to 10.5% in the same quarter of 2006. The dependency ratio is increased from 4.8 in the third quarter of 2000 to 5.9 in the same quarter of 2006.

Poverty ratio is estimated by about 23.0% in the Palestinian Territory in 1997, where 45% of the Palestinian households lay under the poverty line till June 2006. Also about half of Palestinian households loose half of their income during the fourth quarter of 2005 (about 51.6%). According to the result of the household expenditure and consumption survey of the year 2004 about 52.0% of the poor households relay in the humanitarian assistance, this percentage is reduced to about 29.4% in the 2nd quarter of 2006.

The Israeli Siege in the Gaza strip since the beginning of the current year, and the frequent closure of the cross borders effect the availability of the main food commodities which lead to ten fold increasing of the prices comparing with the first half of the year 2005 . Also the consumer prices in Gaza Strip showed an increase by about 4.13% due to increasing of the most commodity group prices, and the food commodity shows an increase by about 6.41% during the first half of this year comparing with the same period of the previous year. The frequent closure of Al-Mentar crossing in Gaza Strip during 2006 expect to reduce the percentage of the imported goods in Gaza Strip to 35.0% comparing to 2005.

Agriculture sector is considered as the main sector of the Palestinian life, during the last five years it is dramatically effected where it's contribution in the national Gross Domestic Production is reduced from 9.1% in 2000 to about 7.0% in 2005, the total production of the agriculture crops was reduced by the percentage of 3.6% between the two years 2000 and 2005. The value added of the agriculture sector reduced in the percentage of 30.7% during the last five years. The direct and the indirect losses of the agriculture sector due to Israeli measures was estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture to reach about US\$ 345 million from the beginning of *Intifada* up to January 2006.