



## Press Release by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Environment Quality Authority on World Environment Day (WED)

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated annually on the 5 June since 1972. WED is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the environment. Over the years it has grown to be a broad, global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated by stakeholders in more than 100 countries, the theme for 2017, is "Connecting People to Nature".

Despite its small geographical area, State of Palestine is characterized by a great variation in topography. This variation is directly reflected on climate and the distribution and diversification of agricultural patterns.

The West Bank is divided into four major geomorphologic parts: Nablus Mountains, Jerusalem Mountains, Hebron Mountains, and the Jordan Valley. The mountainous area of the West Bank serves as the main rainfall collection and replenishment zone for the underground water aquifers. Many drainage and valley systems are spread in and among the above mentioned four parts.

Gaza Strip is essentially a foreshore plain gradually sloping westwards. In the north of the Gaza Strip there are four ridges with different elevations ranging between 20 to 90 m above Sea Level. The ridges are: Coastal ridge, Gaza ridge, the el-Muntar ridge and the Beit Hanoun ridge.

### Protected Areas

With regard to natural reserves. The National Spatial Plan prepared by the MoLG in 2014 indicates that the total area of natural reserves in the West Bank including east Jerusalem 51,157 hectares forming 9% of the West Bank area.

They are located mainly in the eastern slopes and Jordan River area. The Palestinians were prevented by Israeli occupation power from access and work freely in them, which clarifies that the Israelis occupation policy of nature protection has political aims rather

than those of protecting biodiversity. A portion of these reserves have been converted to Israeli illegal settlement regime and occupation military bases and a large part were included within the annexation and separation Wall.

Most of the existing nature reserves in the West Bank belong to the Area C. Only 13 reserves (or 11.3% of the total reserve area) are within the Area B.

### Forests

The total forested area in the West Bank including east Jerusalem region forms 7,830 hectares in the year 2012 forming only 1% of the total West Bank area. The total forested area annexed behind the annexation and separation wall is 4,200 hectares in the year 2012. The total forested area annexed in the eastern annexation and separation wall zone is 150 hectares. Most of these forests were planted during the British mandate, although a small percentage was made up of remnants of natural forests.

### Rainfall

The amount of rainfall in 2016 was 681 mm in Nablus Station, and 107 mm in Jericho station. The mean average rainfall in Nablus station is 660 mm and 166 mm in Jericho, and the distribution of rainfall level was concentrated in most of the governorates in December and January during the year 2016.

### Water

The Household Environmental Survey 2015 results showed that 93% of households in Palestine live in housing units connected to the public water network, whereas the household sector in Palestine consumed about 16.3 million cubic meters of water per month (MCM/month) during 2015, distributed as follows: 10.4 MCM/month in the West Bank and 5.9 MCM/month in Gaza Strip.

The monthly average household consumption of water in Palestine was 18.7 cubic meters ( $M^3$ ): 18.3  $M^3$  in the West Bank and 19.7  $M^3$  in Gaza Strip.

### Wastewater

During 2015, data indicated that 54% of households in Palestine used wastewater networks to dispose of their wastewater, 32% of households used porous cesspits, 13% used tight cesspits and 1% used other



methods to dispose wastewater such as disposed in valleys.

### **Biodiversity in Palestine**

There are about 51,000 living species (flora and fauna) in historical Palestine, constituting approximately 3% of global biodiversity.

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip there are an estimated 30,850 animal species, consisting of an estimated 30,000 invertebrates, 373 birds, 297 fish, 92 mammals, 81 reptiles and 5 amphibians.

### **Sources:**

1. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017: Press Release on the Occasion of World Meteorological Day (WMD).
2. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015. Household Environmental Survey, 2015 . Ramallah - Palestine.
3. State of Palestine, Fifth National Report, to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2015.

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