

May 17: Information Technology Society Day

Press release by The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

The contribution of the Palestinian telecommunication sector to the Gross Domestic Product is 7.6%. Twenty percent of the total telecommunication services provided by Israeli providers to the Palestinian Territory are illegal

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) issues a press release on the Information Technology Society Day (ITS) on May 17th. The main features of the ITS in the Palestinian Territory are as follows:

The Contribution of the Information Technology (IT) sector to the National Economy:

In 2006, the IT sector contributed 7.6% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Palestinian Territory; most of this contribution came from the telecommunication sector. The majority of the employees in this sector are working in the telecommunication activities (cable and wireless), and activities related to computer. The number of employees in this sector reached 3600 persons. The value added from the telecommunication sector reached US \$ 311 million, while it did not exceed US \$ 2 million from computer-related activities. The usage of IT, especially the Internet, in e-commerce is very limited, where it represented 1% from the total trading activities in the Palestinian Territory.

The only legal provider of telecommunication services in the Palestinian Territory is the Palestinian Telecommunication Group (PALTEL), which includes the certified provider of mobile telecommunications. Oslo Accords prohibit Israel from providing mobile telephone services to the Palestinian Territory; however, Israeli mobile telephone services providers provide the Palestinian Territory with about 20% of the mobile services, which are considered illegal.

Due to the weakness of the IT industry in the Palestinian Territory, the exports of the products and services of this sector are very low in comparison with the imports, which in 2006 reached approximately U.S. \$ 124 million, such exports were limited to about U.S. \$ 18 million. This indicates that the IT sector is a promising sector for investment in the Palestinian Territory.

Palestinian household's ownership of the IT devices

The ownership of PCs in the Palestinian households has tripled during the period of 2000 – 2006 reaching almost 33% in 2006. Moreover, the availability of Internet service at homes increased ten times during the same period, reaching 15% in 2006. The ownership of mobile telephone reached 81% in 2006 compared to 40% in 2000. The satellite dish ownership by households increased from about 50% in 2000 to 80% in 2006. The ownership of telephone lines at home increased from 33% in 2000 to 51% in 2006.

Individuals' usage of IT tools

About half of the Palestinians (aged 10 years and over) have access to the Internet; however, 20% actually use it. On the other hand, there is a big gap between males and females in favor to males since 24% of males actually use the internet compared to 13% among females. The same applies to using computers since data indicate that about 24% of males actually use computers and 17% of females do so. The purpose of computer usage differs among males and females. 44% of males use computers for entertainment purposes compared to 34% of females who use computers for the same purpose. On the other hand, 51% of females use computers for studying compared to 39% of males who use computers for the same purpose.