

## **The PCBS Issues A Press Release on the Occasion of World Tourism Day, September 27, 2008**

### **Improvement in the West Bank and the Deterioration in Gaza Strip in the Indicators of Tourism Demand in the First Half of 2008.**

#### **769 Thousand Visitors, and 213 Thousand Hotel Guests Spent 532 Thousand Nights**

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is pleased to release a statement on the occasion of World Tourism Day on September 27 of each year.

With the easing of the embargo imposed by the occupation authorities on the West Bank and his emphasis on the Gaza Strip, it was noted by the improvement in demand for tourism in the West Bank and to reverse deep in Gaza Strip.

#### **The Capacity of the Hotels During the First Half of 2008**

The number of hotels in the Palestinian Territory during the first half of the year 2008 increased by 4% compared with the previous year, reaching 82 hotels by the middle of this year, with a capacity of 3,957 rooms, including 8,704 beds, where the average number of workers in these hotels was 1,239 of which 14% of them were female.

Jerusalem governorate has the largest number of hotels; there are 26 hotels, including 1,089 rooms comprising 2,566 beds, and 21 hotels in the Middle of the West Bank with a capacity of 877 rooms comprising 2,041 beds; the South of the West Bank has 19 hotels, including 1,493 rooms comprising 3,137 beds, and in Gaza Strip there are 10 hotels, including 391 rooms and comprising 714 beds.

#### **Demand for Tourism During the First Half of 2008**

Statistical data show significant improvement in the situation of the tourism sector from the demand side of tourism in the Palestinian Territory compared with the same period last year, the number of guests during the first half of 2008 in hotels was 213,317 guests, and the number of nights was 531,701. This was an increase of 71% compared with guests for the same period last year.

When comparing the data of this period by the same period in 2000 which witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of guests and nights, followed by a series of declines because of military actions of the Israeli occupation during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, lasting until the year 2007, we note there is an improvement in indicators of hotel activity in the governorates of the West Bank, where the number of guests exceeds those in 2000 at rate of 18%, where as in Gaza Strip there is a reduction in the number to reach 90%. Related to the debates of hotel rooms during the first half of this year the occupancy reached a rate of 40%.

**Inbound Tourism.**

The number of visitors inside the Palestinian Territory during the first half of the year 2008 about 768,665 visitors, compared with 335,876 visitors during the same period last year. Those visitors were distributed by 686,664 foreign visitors and 82,001 visitors from Palestinians living in Israel.

The Governorate of Bethlehem is one of the highest regions in the reception of foreign arrivals during that period, representing 66%, while the presence of local visitors concentrated in the Jericho and Al-Aghwar governorate by 44%, followed by Jenin by 24%, then Tulkarm by 21%. Palestinians living in Israel arriving to the Palestinian Territory focused their presence in Jericho and Al-Aghwar by 69%, followed by Hebron by 23%.

Regarding the distribution of visitor arrivals to the Palestinian Territory by nationality during the first half of 2008, Russian citizenship was the highest rate at 22%, then Polish at 16%, followed by USA at 15%, and Italian at 13%, and then Spanish by 7%.

**National Tourism**

The results of Population, Housing and Establishment Census–2007 showed that 23% of households in the Remaining of West Bank conducted domestic tourist trips during the year 2007. The higher proportion for households implementing domestic trips were from Jerusalem governorate (with the exception of the region J1) at 39 %, followed by Ramallah and Al Bireh at 35%, while the least departure point for domestic trips was from Hebron by 14% of households.

At the level of outbound trips, the rate for households in the rest of the West Bank which had trips outside the country was approximately 8%, whereas the proportion was higher for households of Jerusalem (with the exception of the region J1) at 24%, followed by Ramallah and Al Bireh at 13%. The households with the least occasion of outbound trips were from the provinces of Hebron and Salfit at 5% of households each.