

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Issues a Press Release on the Occasion of World Water Day, March 22

The theme for the World Water Day 2011 is “Water in Cities: Responding to the Urban Challenges

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics “PCBS” issues a press release on the occasion of World Water Day, March 22, presenting key indicators related to water in the Palestinian Territory.

The theme for World Water Day 2011 is “Water for Cities: Responding to Urban Challenges”, due to the changes in the urban society the increase of the population, and so the increasing rate of the built up areas.

The Settler consumes water 7 times the Palestinian consumption

The average consumption rate of water for the Palestinians is 135 l/c/d, while the average consumption rate of water for the Israelis is 353 l/c/d and for the settlers is 900 l/c/d.

The average consumption rate of water for the Palestinians differs from one governorate to another, where in Jericho it was 297.6 l/c/d, 176.3 l/c/d in Gaza strip, while it was much lower in Jenin with 55 l/c/d, and 47 l/c/d in Tubas.

The percentage of salinity is very high in Gaza Strip water

The water in Gaza Strip suffers from high percentage of salinity, since the percentage of chloride in the coastal aquifer was 1000 mg/l compared to 300 mg/l according to the international standards.

The amount of water utilized by Palestinians from aquifers is very little

The Palestinians utilize only 15% of water from the ground water aquifers, while Israelis, including settlers, utilize the remainder, 85%. The Gaza Strip utilizes approximately 18% of the coastal aquifer while Israel utilizes the remainder of the water, 82%.

According to the report “Palestinian Territory and the occupied Arab lands” that was prepared by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, the amount of pure water that is available in the Palestinian Territories is estimated to 2.4 billion cubic meter yearly; of which Israel utilizes about 90% of this quantity.

This situation leads to the increase of water scarcity in the Palestinian Territory and force Palestinians to look for alternative resources such as purchasing water from (Mekarot) company. The amount of water that was purchased in 2010 amounted to 53 MCM in the West Bank

(excluding those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967). This amount was increased by 6 MCM compared with 2009.

The Palestinians pay 5 times more than the settlers

According to the report that was issued by the World Bank in 2009, there is an inequality in the pricing of water for the Palestinians and the settlers. The Palestinians pay 5 times more than the settlers for obtaining water, and that encourages settlers to use an excessive amount of water resources.

The price of cubic meter from tanks is 27 times of that from the water network

In certain communities that are not connected to a water network, Palestinians rely mainly on two sources: the water cisterns that depend on annual rainfall and the purchasing of water tanks.

The real problem exists in communities that rely on tanker water, a source that is extremely expensive with no guarantees over the quality of water provided. The prices of Tanker water reach in many cases 30-50 NIS per cubic meter, which is five times the price of one cubic meter from the network. While in Gaza Strip, the average price of tanker water is 27 times more than that delivered by the network according to the data issued by the WASH MP, Palestinian Hydrology Group, 2009. The source of water for these tanks typically originates from local springs, domestic and agricultural wells, and Mekorot filling points.

Comparison between prices of network and tanker water

Region	The price of 1 m ³ of water	
	Network (NIS/m ³)	Tanker (NIS/m ³)
Palestinian Territory	3.0	24.3
West Bank	3.8	19.4
North of West Bank	3.7	15.7
Middle of West Bank	3.7	24.4
South of West Bank	4.5	23.0
Gaza Strip	1.3	35.0

The celebration of World Water Day aims to attract global attention to water resources, especially in the poor countries (i.e. the third world countries) to stimulate the efforts towards the problem of limited water resources and the increasing of the water crisis in these countries.