

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

On the occasion of May 1, International Workers' Day **The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) issues a press release: The Labor Force in the Palestinian Territory**

On the occasion of International Worker's Day, the PCBS presents data on the situation of the labor market in the Palestinian Territory.

Four out of 10 persons participate in the labour force

Labor force participation is considered the main indicator for the efficiency and activity of the labour market in providing job opportunities. The labour force survey results showed an increase in participation rate to 41.3% of the total labor force (persons aged 15 years and over) in 2008. This means that 4 persons out of 10 are participating in the labor force. The breakdown of participation rate by region was 43.0% in the West Bank, compared with 38.1% in Gaza Strip in 2008. Female participation rate in the Palestinian Territory is considered very low compared with males: for females, 15.2% (17.1% in the West Bank and 11.7% in Gaza Strip), compared with 66.8% for males (68.3% in the West Bank and 64.0% in Gaza Strip).

More than one fourth of labor force participants are unemployed.

The number of unemployed persons was about 227 thousand (112 thousand in the West Bank and 115 thousand in Gaza Strip). The percentage of unemployed among the labor force participants in 2008 was 26.0% (19.0% in the West Bank and 40.6% in Gaza Strip). The unemployment rate reached 23.8% among females compared with 26.5% among males.

The unemployment rate in the Palestinian Territory is considered very high compared with other countries. For instance unemployment rate in Jordan was 13.1% in 2007 and 6.1% in Israel in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Hebron Governorate registered the highest unemployment rate in the West Bank while Khanyounis was the highest in Gaza Strip.

In 2008, Hebron governorate registered the highest unemployment rate at 25.9%, followed by Qalqilya governorate with 23.4%, while the lowest rate in the West Bank was in Jericho and Al Aghwar (9.9%) and Jerusalem Governorate (10.5%). In Gaza Strip, Khanyounis governorate registered the highest unemployment rate at 46.9% followed by Deir Al-Balah (42.7%), while the lowest was in Rafah governorate (35.6%)

648 thousand were employed in the Palestinian Territory.

The number of employed persons is estimated about 648 thousand (males and females) in the Palestinian Territory in 2008 (479 thousand in the West Bank and 169 thousand in Gaza Strip). The number of employed females is estimated about 121 thousand women (96 thousand in the West Bank and 25 thousand in Gaza Strip). The number of employed persons in Israel and Israeli settlements from the West Bank reached about 40 thousand with Palestinian Identity cards and 34 thousand with foreign and Israeli Identity cards, whereas no one from Gaza Strip is employed in Israel. In comparison, the number of employed persons in Israel on the eve of Al Aqsa Intifada (3rd quarter 2000) was 146 thousand (116 thousand from West Bank and 30 thousand from Gaza Strip).

The percentage of wage employees reached 65.3% from total employment (63.7% in the West Bank and 70.0% in Gaza Strip), compared with 67.6% on the eve of the Intifada (66.2% in the West Bank and 71.0% in Gaza Strip). The percentage of self employed increased from 18.1% in the 3rd quarter 2000 to 20.7% in 2008.

The services sector (education, health, public administration, etc) is the main employing sector for the Palestinian labour force; the results showed that 38.4% of employed persons work in that sector (60.2% of which are employed in Gaza Strip, 34.5% employed in the West Bank (excluding the Palestinian workers in Israel and settlements). The construction sector is the main sector for those working in Israel and the Settlements, with 44.3%. The trade and restaurants sector followed the services sector in the local market, employing 21.1% in the West Bank and 18.6% in Gaza Strip, followed by the agricultural sector with 15.7% in the West Bank and 10.7% in Gaza Strip.

The public sector played the main role in reducing the economic crisis that the Palestinian people suffer from during the years of the Intifada. The public sector has absorbed over the last six years about 46 thousand persons for a total of approximately 162 thousand employees in the public sector, including 83 thousand in the West Bank and 79 thousand in Gaza Strip. In 2008, the public sector employed 24.7% of the total employees in the Palestinian Territory (16.8% in the West Bank and 46.8% in the Gaza Strip), compared to 17.4% before the Intifada.

Working hours in Israel and Israeli settlements is the highest among other work places.

Results showed that the average weekly work hours for employed persons in the West Bank was 42.5 hours compared with 40.8 hours in Gaza Strip and 43.6 hours for those working in Israel and the Israeli settlements.

Wages in Gaza Strip are the lowest among other work places.

The median monthly wage for those working in agriculture in the West Bank reached 1,300 NIS, 600 NIS in Gaza Strip and about 2,080 NIS in Israel and Israeli settlements. The highest wage of employees working in the West Bank is for those working in transportation, storage and communication: 1,366 NIS. The highest wage of employees working in Gaza Strip was for those working in services and other branches: 1,700 NIS.

The dependency ratio reached almost 1: 6 in the Palestinian Territory.

The dependency ratio in the Palestinian Territory increased sharply from 4.8 in the 3rd quarter 2000 to 5.9 in 2008 (an increase of 22.9%); it increased in the West Bank from 4.3 to 4.9 (an increase of 14.0%) and increased sharply in Gaza Strip from 5.9 to 8.5 (an increase of 44.1%).

Unemployment among youth is the highest among the age periods.

Results revealed that unemployment among youth increased: unemployment is concentrated among the youth aged, 15-24 years, at 40.2% (30.9% in the West Bank and 58.6% in Gaza Strip), followed by 25-34 age group, at 25.5% (18.5% in the West Bank and 39.3% in Gaza Strip).

Unemployment rate was the highest among bachelor degree holders.

The results showed that the highest unemployment rate was registered among university graduates, at 27.2% (22.2% in the West Bank and 34.4% in Gaza Strip), followed by graduates who hold an associate diploma at 24.0% (14.4% in the West Bank and 42.6% in Gaza Strip).