



State of Palestine



PALESTINIAN NATIONAL VOLUNTARY REVIEW
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Introduction	6
Report preparation process	7
Organisation of the report	8
Political & Socioeconomic Context	9
Enabling Environment	12
Institutional arrangements	12
National ownership, localisation and integration of the SDGs	13
Monitoring the SDG indicators	15
Implementing the SDGs	16
People	18
SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	20
SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	24
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	28
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	32
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	36
SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	40
Planet	42
SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	44
SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	48
SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	50
SDG13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	52
SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	54
SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	56
Prosperity	60
SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	62
SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	66
Peace	70
SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	72
SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	76
Partnerships	80
Partnerships: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	82
Challenges to the Implementation of the SDGs	84
Conclusion and Looking Forward	86

Abbreviations

HLPF	High Level Policy Forum
NPA	National Policy Agenda 2017-2022
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VNR	Voluntary National Review



State of Palestine

FOREWORD

It is my honor as Prime Minister to present to our fellow UN members at the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, our Palestinian people, and our local and international partners, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the State of Palestine.

Following President of the State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas's leadership, the Palestinian Government embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and it has committed to work with local and international partners to realize these goals. The preparation of the VNR comes as part of the government's asserting commitment to the 2030 Agenda, and expression of its persistence of moving forward in its endeavors to achieve the SDGs despite the challenges and hinderances the Israeli Occupation imposes.

With the launching of the SDGs, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) formed a national team headed by the PMO with membership of all interested parties of governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. The team tackles the coordination responsibility for national efforts to follow-up and implement the SDGs. It is a decision that represents our belief that the full and real partnership between government, civil society organizations and private sector is our only choice to face the challenges inhibiting Palestinian development and the Palestinian people, and to confront the measures and policies of the Israeli occupation that limit the opportunities for sustainable development and our hope of better lives, rights and livelihoods.

The slogan of the 2030 Agenda, Leave No One Behind, cannot be realized in a country that the whole world is leaving behind, a country that lives under a protracted and ongoing occupation that imposes restrictions over its government and hinders its access to serve its people wherever they are. A country that is under occupation with no full sovereignty and control over its resources cannot achieve the SDGs and realize its slogan of leaving none of its citizens behind.

Gaza has been under an illegal Israeli blockade for more than 10 years, bringing nearly 2 million Palestinians to the brink of collapse as the humanitarian crisis grows in severity and intensity, where estimates expect Gaza to be unlivable by 2020. Area C, representing up to two thirds of the West Bank where the occupation prevents the Palestinian government's access to, house up to 1 million Palestinians that the government are unable to provide services and facilitate development for. The major challenge has been providing adequate infrastructure for the delivery of basic and public services to Palestinians in Area C as the Israeli occupation continues its stringent policies on Palestinian development while simultaneously expanding illegal Israeli settlements that have resulted in the forcible transfer of Palestinians, illegal under international law. East Jerusalem, the eternal capital of State of Palestine, has been isolated from its hinterland and the remainder of the West Bank, where the Israeli occupation is attempting to destroy the social fabric and cohesion of Palestine people. Moreover, Palestinians in East Jerusalem live under a series of accelerating Israeli measures that are working to Judaize the city and obliterate its Palestinian Arab identity.

Ending Israeli occupation, enabling Palestinian people of performing their right of self-determination and embodying its independent sovereign state over its lands, borders and resources are prerequisite for Palestine to achieve its national priorities of sustainable development. It is a prerequisite that cannot be realized without the support and partnership of the international community to compel Israel to commit to the numerous internationally recognized and legitimized resolutions and principles of international law and human rights that highlight Israel's responsibility, mainly in ending the occupation of Palestinian land.

Despite the challenges and obstacles the occupation imposes, the government and its partners - as much as they could do under the obstacles - were able to achieve tangible results on the level of providing public services for citizens, where further achievements can be built upon through the realization of the National Policy Agenda (NPA) 2017-2022 "Putting Citizens First." The NPA represents a holistic national working programme for human rights, freedom, justice, prosperity and environment focusing on three main topics: independence, maintenance and improvement of the quality of public services, and the enhancement of efforts towards sustainable development. As the 2030 Agenda was being launched, the NPA was simultaneously under preparation, presenting a prime opportunity for the inclusion of the SDGs and national priorities into our agenda, considering our political, social and economic context.

Our ability to move on in achieving the SDGs is highly attached to the success of the international community in supporting the enabling environment for Palestine, represented in ending the Israeli occupation and enabling Palestinian people to access, invest in and improve its natural resources. The commitment of supportive and partner countries will remain a cornerstone in enabling the government and its partners of providing sustainable services for Palestinian people, especially refugees. We also reject the attempts to politicize humanitarian and developmental aid provided to Palestinians, as these attempts represent political blackmail, a blatant violation of our sovereignty, and a threat to the international partnership for sustainable development. A clear example of that is the cuts of financial aids to UNRWA that will prevent a huge number of refugees receiving basic services.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the national team of Sustainable Development, working groups of SDGs, representatives of civil society, private sector, UN agencies working in Palestine, and for UNDP for its support in the elaboration of this report, in addition to representatives of ministries and governmental organizations who contributed to this review. From here, I call and invite our partners to work together in order not to leave any of our citizens behind.

Rami Al Hamdallah

The Prime Minister



INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda are a set of universally agreed goals and targets adopted by heads of states and governments at the United Nations Sustainable Development summit in 2015, which strive to eradicate poverty and guarantee dignity and a good quality of life for all. Comprised of 17 goals and 165 targets, they represent a partnership between the developed and developing world to tackle global complex and interdependent challenges in today's globalised world. The goals provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and challenges.

Demonstrating the State of Palestine's commitment to achieving sustainable development, this voluntary national review (VNR) aims to provide detailed information about the status of Palestine's path towards implementing and achieving the SDGs to be presented to the international community at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018. With this review and Palestine's first presentation at the HLPF, the government of Palestine hopes to shed light on the challenges affecting Palestine's ability to meet its international commitment to achieve the SDGs and to actively participate in the ongoing global dialogue amongst all participating nations towards shared vision, mutual learning and strong partnerships to achieve the SDGs.

This review will assess the situation surrounding the implementation of the SDGs in Palestine, focusing on the challenges as they stand, catering to each individual goal and its relevance to the Palestinian context. Owing to the particularly unique reality of the State of Palestine and its people under Israeli military occupation, this review highlights the importance of localising the SDGs to suit Palestine's particular political and socioeconomic context. The external constraints and challenges of the occupation policies and practices have no doubt severely affected the State of Palestine's capacity to provide adequate and quality services to its population.

Nonetheless, undeterred by the exceptionally challenging environment of pursuing the attainment of the SDGs under occupation, the Palestinian government is committed to achieving a better and dignified life, and to contribute to the well-being of humanity. As such, this review highlights the steps the Palestinian government have taken to create an enabling environment for the localisation and integration of the SDGs into national and cross-sectorial strategies. From day one, the Palestinian government ensured the adoption of global agendas. The National Policy Agenda 2017 – 2022 and cross-sectorial strategies were developed taking into account global priorities, including the sustainable development goals and targets that fit with the Palestinian development priorities for the next six years.

Therefore, key objectives of this review are:

- Document goal-by-goal status of the SDGs in Palestine;
- Highlight the challenges that undermine the pursuit of the SDGs;
- Present the localization of the SDGs into national policy agenda 2017-2022, sectorial and cross-sectorial national strategies;
- Highlight innovative responses and interventions that the Palestinian government have undertaken despite the confines of the occupation;
- Enhance stakeholder engagement in the follow-up and implementation of the SDGs;
- Support the creation of a developmental roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs in Palestine;



REPORT PREPARATION PROCESS

This review was created in accordance with the common reporting guidelines of the HLPF. In congruence with the founding principles of the 2030 Agenda, multi-stakeholder consultations and participation formulated the key basis of the preparation of this review. Over 500 mid-level and high-level representatives of governmental institutions, UN Agencies, local and international NGOs, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector participated in numerous deliberations to ensure an inclusive process and representation of all segments of the Palestinian society in the review process. This includes data collection, dissemination and mainstreaming of the information on goals and targets, alongside participating in discussions on the prioritisation and localisation of the SDGs.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) led the review process to ensure high-level participation and buy in, as well as national ownership of the report's findings and outcomes. The PMO's leadership to the process was supported by a steering committee of senior level officials and the National SDGs Team, which includes representatives from 24 governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations. Additionally, the PMO assigned a report drafting team to support the National SDG Team in the development of this review. A clear division of responsibilities was established between the drafting team, the National SDG Team and the steering committee as well as 12 SDG working groups established to follow and implement the SDGs. The 12 working groups were tasked with mapping and monitoring the targets and indicators relevant to their associated SDGs. Separately, the SDG working groups held roundtable discussions at various points in time to share and discuss their insights and comments during the preparation of their inputs to the successive drafts of the report.

The information in this review is based on a series of technical consultations, statistical data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and relevant line ministries, and a desk review of different development reports and publications produced by the Palestinian government, and its development partners.

VNR Preparation Process



ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

- The following section presents the political and socioeconomic context, the impact of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian Government’s ability to effectively implement the SDGs, which predicate the localisation of the SDGs in Palestine and the integration of the SDGs into national and cross-sectorial strategies.
- A presentation of the enabling environment and institutional arrangements that the State of Palestine has established to monitor and follow-up on the implementation of the SDGs, drawing links between the goals and the Palestinian government’s ambitious National Policy Agenda 2017-2022.
- Each of the 17 goals and indicators will be presented based on statistical information, challenges faced, and main initiatives taken by the government to achieve further progress in each SDG. The SDGs are organised under the subheadings of People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships, based on the multi-stakeholder roundtable consultations held during the preparation of the review.
- A highlight of the ongoing challenges Palestine faces under the Israeli military occupation that disables it from moving towards a successful implementation of the SDGs.
- The review concludes with the potential opportunities for moving forward towards the implementation of the SDGs.

POLITICAL & SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT



Palestine continues to be locked within a series of vicious circles; the most vicious circle, of course, is the prolonged Israeli occupation. This year (2018) marks 51 years of the Israeli military occupation with no end in sight to the conflict. After more than 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, 70 years since the Nakba, and 30 years since the first Intifada, Israel continues to pursue its colonial regime and perilous annexation agenda and devastating occupation policies and practices unabated. Settlements continue to spread and expand rapidly across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, killing any hope to materialize the two-state solution. Israel, the occupying power, has already constructed 257 illegal settlements on Palestinian public and private lands, where all together encompass 46% of the West Bank. Palestinians are increasingly shut out of Area C, which constitute 64% of the West Bank and encompasses the majority of Palestine's natural resources. The Wall hives off around 10% of the West Bank and entrap over 350,000 Palestinians between the Wall and the 1967 borders.

In Area C and East Jerusalem, the sustainable development of approximately 740,000 citizens in 612 communities are debilitated by Israel's occupation policies that aim to facilitate Israel's ongoing illegal land annexation and settlement-building to alter the demographic, physical and cultural composition of key Palestinian communities. While these illegal Israeli settlements exploit Palestinian natural resources, Palestinians are simultaneously denied from accessing these same resources being denied permission to construct even the basic economic and social infrastructure. As a result, the Palestinian society suffers from deteriorating living conditions in Area C as they are denied access to basic services, including water and electricity, and decent housing. Confiscation of the natural resources intensifies. The most egregious example is water, where Israel continues to extract 80% of the West Bank's estimated potential water resources. Other natural resources include land, natural gas, oil and

minerals. Violence against Palestinians continues unabated and demolitions of Palestinian properties remain high with Israeli occupation demolishing 412 establishments including homes and expelling 631 persons in 2017. As of May 2018, 160 establishment including homes and expelled 123 persons.

Gaza remains under blockade and slipping rapidly into further humanitarian crisis. The Israeli aggression in 2014, which devastated the Gaza Strip, caused the destruction of 18,000 homes. With reconstruction slowed, more than 22,000 individuals remain displaced - a total of 4126 families. The ongoing blockade for past 10 years and three consecutive military aggressions have devastated socio-economic conditions through heavily restricted imports and exports, blocking the construction of vital infrastructure and denying Palestinians in Gaza access to economic resources. The siege has isolated Gaza from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the world. Socio-economic conditions have deteriorated further into unliveable conditions as the blockade has resulted in poor access to safe, clean water, an interrupted electricity supply, vast unemployment, substandard housing, and widespread food insecurity. With a total population of approximately 1.89 million, where nearly 40% of the population are under the age of 14, the siege is disproportionately affecting Gazan women and children. The 2014 Israeli aggression on Gaza caused vast damage to public and private infrastructure, destroying and seriously damaging schools, hospitals, water and power plants, industrial infrastructure and agricultural land. Consequently, Gaza's contribution to the overall economy has fell considerably since. One of the major challenges to the Palestinian government is to repair all the infrastructure damage and provide adequate services to Palestinian citizens in Gaza. Most urgently, the government is facing serious challenges providing adequate medical equipment, supplies and medication to our people in Gaza. Hospitals struggle under limited water and electricity supplies, and patients in need of

critical care in Jerusalem hospitals are denied permits to leave Gaza to seek the necessary medical attention in Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

Peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine are stalled due to Israeli measures and policies. Peace negotiations are made impossible with the recent declaration by the US president recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Such policies coupled with the ongoing Israeli belligerent actions have complicated the situation on the ground causing a new wave of protests across the occupied Palestinian territory since 1967. Such relatively controlled protests could, at any time, turn into a full-blown intifada. During Black Monday, Israel attacked non-violent protestors at the Gaza March of Return causing the death of 63 Palestinians, eight of whom were children and injuring 2,770 protestors in a striking breach of international law.

The current change in American foreign policy set a dangerous precedent to the international order, in which millions have died to ensure the universal values of human rights and freedom of self-determination for nations. The changing tide of the United States' foreign policy is of grave concern to the Palestinian government, not only from the illegal unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, but also the recently signed the "Tailor Force" bill, which essentially has resulted in cutting developmental aid to the Palestinian

government and UNRWA. Such measure is seen as politicisation of the American support to the Palestinian people and a threat to their right of self-determination; it also threatens the ability of the Palestinian government and partners to continue supporting the welfare of the Palestinian people and the fulfilment of the two-state solution.

Jerusalem remains isolated with very restricted presence of the Palestinian government. Palestinians in Jerusalem suffer from discriminatory Israeli policies and human rights violations. The wall and settlements, illegal under international law, separate and isolate the Palestinian capital and create a coercive environment for Palestinians, consequently threatening the Palestinian identity, culture and heritage in Jerusalem. East Jerusalem's isolation has devastated the economic productivity of the capital of the State of Palestine, severely diminishing its contribution to the Palestinian economy. These discriminatory policies have had an overwhelming impact on increasing poverty, unemployment and social disintegration experienced by Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

As highlighted in various sections of this report, the Israeli occupation is overwhelmingly the principle constraint for the State of Palestine to achieve the SDGs, as it affects all aspects of Palestinian life. The crippling impact of the Israeli occupation underline the necessity of achieving full Palestinian sovereignty, within the internationally-mandated 1967



borders and Jerusalem as its capital, as a predicate to the achievement of the SDGs. This includes adequate commitment and support from the international community in pressuring Israel to abide by the numerous UN Resolutions and international law and principles related to the question of Palestine and the rights of Palestinians for statehood, freedom, self-determination, and the return of refugees.

Since 2007, Palestine has experienced a state of internal division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, resulting in a split in the executive, legislative and judicial institutions, thus adding to the challenges faced by Gaza, which remain under Israeli military blockade and consecutive attacks. Gaza Strip, where the majority of indicators for sustainable development have declined significantly. In 2017, a reconciliation agreement was signed between Fatah and Hamas to end the division to rebuild and unify the political and institutional structures of the Palestinian society. Despite these efforts, the National Reconciliation Government has not yet assumed its functions and responsibilities in the Gaza Strip; a clear failure in the implementation of the terms of the agreement, which threatens the process of reconciliation and the return to division.

According to the 2017 census, the Palestinian Government is responsible for 4.78m citizens that live within the State of Palestine while the UNRWA shares the responsibility by

providing services to refugees, with 1.89m citizens living in the Gaza Strip and 2.88m living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian population grows at a rate of 2.8% annually. The Palestinian population is very young with the average age of 21.3 years. The population consists of 47% are the underage category (0-17), 24.8% make up the youth category (18-29), 5.2% are elderly (60+); future predictions expect the average age to stay below 25.

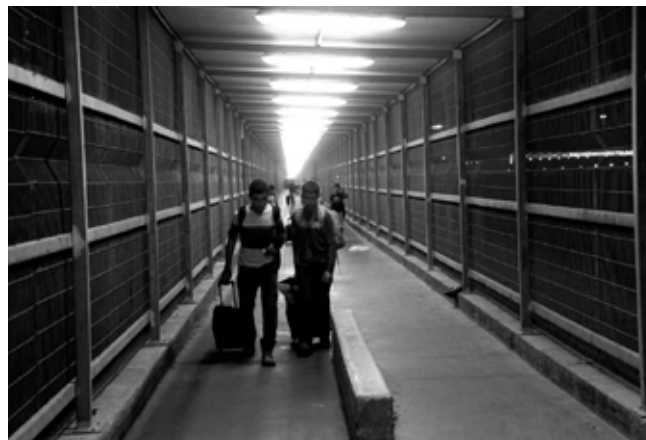
This high growth rate will increase the population to 6.9m by 2030 and 9.5 by 2050. This growth will increase the pressure on delivering basic services, especially education, health and labour market, which challenges the Palestinian government's ability to sustain and develop the standards of living in Palestine. This increase also presents an immense opportunity to utilize the capacities of a young and educated population through the adoption of social and economic policies that can provide youth the opportunity to participate positively in development. Yet, these social and economic policies are impossible to be implemented with the occurrence of the occupation of Palestine.

Despite the external constraints caused by the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian Government continues its efforts to provide an internal enabling environment essential to the achievement of the sustainable development goals and the national priorities of the Palestinian people. The following sections of the report highlight these efforts.



ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The Israeli occupation imposes immense restrictions on the Palestinian government, which have created an external disabling environment that counteracts the government’s efforts to foster an internal enabling environment. Despite external challenges, the Palestinian government took the required measures to establish an institutional enabling environment towards the achievement of the SDGs. Until the right of self-determination is attained and an end is put to the colonization and occupation of Palestinian land, an external disabling environment will continue to be imposed upon the Palestinian governments’ strive to join the international community in achieving the SDGs and attaining a better quality of life for all of its citizens.



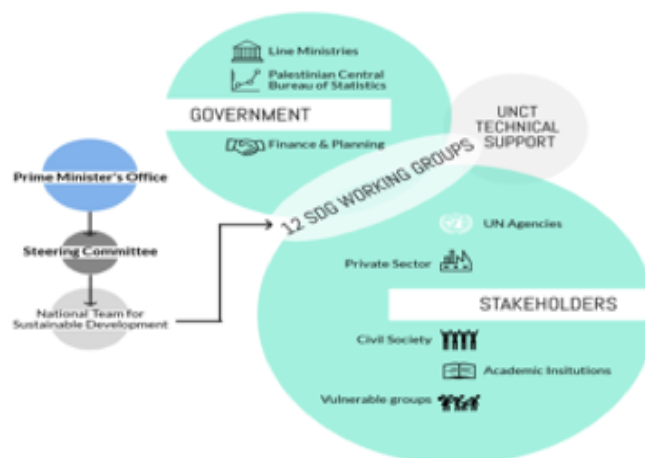
INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Since the MDGs, the State of Palestine has made enormous strides in building up the capacity of national institutions and state structures to support the Palestinian people in line with national development priorities. Such capacity building has also enabled the strengthening of the institutional arrangements for monitoring Palestine’s international commitments. Learning from the MDGs experience, the government aims to strengthen partnerships with the relevant stakeholders and to allow as many stakeholders as possible to engage in the follow up and implementation of the SDGs. Therefore, the following structure reflects the government’s inclusive approach and partnership with local and international partners, governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The Palestinian council of ministers issued a decree establishing a national team to lead the implementation of the SDGs under the overview of the PMO. Tasked with coordination for the implementation and follow-up of the SDGs amongst all related stakeholders, including members from NGOs and the private sector. Led by the PMO, the establishment of the National SDG Team was based on lessons learned from the MDGs to allow different partners to participate in the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs in all stages of the process, from prioritisation to implementation and evaluation. The responsibility of the team is to determine sustainable development priorities in Palestine and integrate them within the national framework for planning and budgeting processes, lead and coordinate the preparation of national reviews of progress towards the SDGs.

To support the National SDG Team, 12 SDG working groups were established. The relevant governmental institutions in

Figure 1: Institutional arrangement for the follow-up and implementation of the SDGs



close collaboration with the relevant UN partner agencies lead the 12 SDG working groups. The working groups are composed of representatives from NGOs, private sector and academic institutions with expertise in the relevant SDG. Each working group is tasked with one of the SDGs with the exception of two working groups, one of which merged SDG 1 “No Poverty” and SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, and one of which merges the environmental related SDGs (12, 13, 14, 15). SDG 17 “Partnerships” concerns all groups and therefore is included in the mandates of all the working groups whilst being led by the PMO.

To enhance coordination and communication between the different stakeholders; the National SDG Team identified focal points for each working group responsible for leading and coordinating national efforts to pursue and implement the relevant SDG. Simultaneously, the UN Resident Coordinator in

Palestine designated focal points in respective UN agencies to support the SDG working groups. Together, the focal points identified the joint work principles, priorities and future steps.

As a result of establishing the SDG working groups, the number of stakeholders engaged in the follow-up and implementation of the SDGs increased to more than 300 stakeholders from various sectors. The responsibility of the working groups is to regularly track the progress of their specific goal. The national working groups began their work by identifying the priority goals and targets for Palestine during the years 2017-2022, developing interventions to implement these priorities. The groups were instrumental in developing the first voluntary national review report.

The national team works closely with the relevant UN agencies that share the same goal. UN agencies collaborate collectively and individually with their governmental counterparts. They provide support to the government by assisting in the follow-up, implementation and technical support to the achievement of the SDGs.

Table 1: Breakdown of the 12 SDG Working Groups :

SDG WORKING GROUPS	LEAD MINISTRIES	UN COUNTERPART AGENCIES
1 & 10	Ministry of Social Development	UNDP, UNICEF
2	Ministry of Agriculture	FAO
3	Ministry of Health	WHO
4	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	UNESCO
5	Ministry of Women's Affairs	UN Women
6	Palestinian Water Authority	UNICEF
7	Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority	UNDP
8	Ministry of Labour, Ministry of the National Economy	ILO
9	Ministry of the National Economy, Ministry of Public Works and Housing	UNOPS
11	Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Public Works and Housing	UN Habitat
12-15	Environmental Quality Agency	UNDP
16	Ministry of Justice	UNDP
17	Prime Minister Office	UNSCO

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP, LOCALISATION AND INTEGRATION OF THE SDGS

The 2030 Agenda emphasises the responsibility of each state to identify targets that align with their own national priorities and decide on ways to integrate the SDGs into national planning, policy and strategy processes. Against the political background and expanding on Palestine's national planning processes, efforts have already been underway to consider the SDGs and other international and regional development agendas, to which the State of Palestine is committed to, in national development planning and budgeting

The concurrence of the launching of the 2030 Agenda with the preparation process of the NPA 2017-2022 presented a conducive opportunity to work towards integrating the SDGs into the NPA from the onset of deliberations. At a sectorial level, ministries and governmental institutions have also been requested to take into consideration the SDGs in the process of developing their sectorial and cross-sectorial strategies.

In order to benefit from this opportunity, the PMO in its capacity as the lead of the National SDG Team, and in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and Planning ensured that the guide for the preparation of sectorial and cross-sectorial strategies included guidelines for the integration of priority SDG targets into these strategies. As for the national policy agenda, the PMO ensured the full integration of the priority SDGs into the different parts of the NPA as instructed directly from the highest level in the Palestinian government.

The NPA "Putting Citizens First" represents a national program of action for Palestine focusing on the rights of citizens for freedom, justice, basic services, economic opportunities, safety and prosperity. An analysis of the agenda highlights that the overall framework of the strategy clearly reflects the transformation advocated in the 2030 Agenda in their mutual focus on the impoverished, marginalised and vulnerable groups and leaving no one behind. The central focus of citizens reflects the government's priorities of strengthening the governmental response to citizens and their needs, while making greater efforts to raise the standard of living for the most marginalised despite the obstacles posed by the occupation.

The NPA was drafted through a broad consultative process that extended to more than one year, involving all stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, international and UN organisations. During the consultations and deliberations of the NPA, it became clear that the State of Palestine cannot prioritize all of the SDG

targets due to the complex political and socio-economic context, the timeframe of the NPA and budgetary constraints. Comprised of three pillars, the overall vision of the NPA is underpinned by the commitment of the government to achieving a unified, sovereign and prosperous State of Palestine. It makes clear that “we must acknowledge that sustainable development cannot be achieved under Israeli occupation and without control over Area C’s vast resources.” Palestine’s unique circumstances therefore require tailored

response, focusing on sustainable development in a way that contributes directly towards building economic, political and social independence and ending the Israeli occupation, to strengthen the resilience of Palestinian society and the Palestinian nation. As a result, the NPA makes clear that sustainable development requires a holistic approach that crosscuts a wide array of interventions, actions and priorities, all underpinned by the critical need to end fifty one years of Israeli military occupation.

Path to Independence: We seek to realize the vision of an independent sovereign Palestinian state and the end of occupation, extending the Palestinian sovereignty over the entire territory of the State of Palestine on the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem as the capital. The achievement of national unity and the strengthening of the unity of the Palestinian land and people are a priority, with special attention being paid to strengthening ties with Palestinians wherever they may be while also enhancing their contribution to Palestinian statehood and independence. We will also seek to enhance the practice of democracy in the State of Palestine. Further, we will increase national and international efforts, in cooperation with all partners. To activate mechanisms for holding the Israeli occupation to account before international structures and courts. Within the same context, we will enhance the international status of the State of Palestine by strengthening participation in the international system and consolidating Palestine’s bilateral relations.

Government Reform and Quality Service Delivery: The government will strengthen its response to citizens by enhancing the response of local authorities to citizens, improving the standards of public services provided to the population and ensuring equality and equity in accessing these services. We also seek to enhance effectiveness of the government’s accountability and transparency and improve efficiency in the management of public funds.

Sustainable Development: The government seeks to achieve economic independence by strengthening the pillars of the Palestinian economy and providing a conducive environment for investment that would help advance the industry and other promising productive sectors and provide decent work opportunities for all. Social justice is at the core of the NPA, as we commit to working on reducing poverty, providing adequate and integrated social protection systems for the poor and the marginalized, promoting access to justice for all, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, and securing a better future for Palestinian youth. We are also committed to providing quality and inclusive education for all, with focus on early childhood education for our children, improving student enrolment and retention, improving the quality of education and facilitating graduates’ entry into the labour market. We also strive to provide comprehensive and quality healthcare services that are accessible to all. We also seek to support citizens’ resilience on their land by ensuring safety and security, strengthening the rule of law, providing basic needs for communities, promoting agriculture and enhancing rural communities, ensuring environmental sustainability and sustainable management of natural resources, and protecting the Palestinian identity and cultural heritage.

Localising the SDGs in the Palestinian context went through two steps: identifying the national priorities from the SDGs, and integrating the key priority targets in the NPA and sectorial strategies. The SDGs were therefore nationalized and integrated into national planning rather than being adopted as a national agenda (refer to annex for the full alignment table). By framing the national planning within a shorter timeframe of 2017-2022, the Palestinian government will be able to reassess progress towards the SDGs at the end of this phase before the next NPA is formulated. This will ensure that Palestine remains on track to achieving the SDGs, taking into account the occupation restrictions, and will allow for the readjustment of the NPA and sectorial strategies as needed, to reflect new priorities until 2030.

A comparison between the 2030 Agenda and the NPA reveals that over the next 6 years, the State of Palestine will focus on 75 of the 169 targets. However, when considering the sectorial and cross-sectorial strategies, which focus on additional set of targets, the total number of targets will increase to 105. The identification of the priority targets was based on several factors, including the needs and priorities of the population, resource availability, the planning timeframe and the specific conditions in which Palestinian institutions operate under the occupation, which impedes their access and ability to provide services to the Palestinian people within the State of Palestine.

MONITORING THE SDG INDICATORS

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) is responsible for localizing and monitoring the SDG indicators in cooperation with all relevant ministries and national institutions, and in coordination with international organizations, especially UN agencies concerned with these indicators. To this regard, the PCBS has updated its data management structure to fulfil its vision of integrating data producers and expanding the use of data from administrative records for statistical purposes. A general directorate of "Records and Statistical Monitoring" was created with the aim of collecting, compiling, publishing and documenting statistics from the administrative records of various public and private institutions and combining it with the data from the findings of surveys and censuses. This is envisaged to facilitate the monitoring of SDG indicators and statistical monitoring indicators at the national level within the social, economic and environmental sectors, according to the national strategic vision and goals. A public database will be made available for researchers, scholars and other users. PCBS also formed an internal technical task force to monitor the methodology and provision of data for SDG indicators. This task force consists of experts in methodology, data quality, spatial information systems and statisticians who are experienced in the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as experts in the field of technological information systems and in data collection from various sources.

On a regional and global level, efforts to further the State of Palestine's contribution to international and regional efforts in the field of data provision and monitoring of SDG indicators has led PCBS to represent the State of Palestine in the UN High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB).

A total of 109 indicators are available, while some of the indicators lack categorization (regional, gender, age, ET). The collection of data in Palestine remains highly challenging due to the restrictions imposed on the access of the Palestinian government to certain areas of the occupied Palestinian territory – Jerusalem, Area C, Financial and capacity restrictions play a role in the lack of the availability of some of the indicators and their categorization. To fill the gap in available data, the PCBS will strengthen and institutionalize the administrative records' system as a main source of data in order to bridge data gaps, standardize data sources and adopted methodologies.

Table 2: SDG Indicators by Goals and Availability:

SDG	Availability of Data		Total
	Available	Not available	
1	7	7	14
2	5	8	13
3	15	12	27
4	7	4	11
5	7	7	14
6	4	7	11
7	4	2	6
8	13	4	17
9	8	4	12
10	2	9	11
11	4	11	15
12	1	12	13
13	3	5	8
14	0	10	10
15	9	5	14
16	10	13	23
17	10	15	25
Total	109	135	244



IMPLEMENTING THE SDGS

This Section reports on the progress and implementation of the SDGs. It describes the status to date, ongoing challenges to implementation, and key interventions implemented by the government. Based on the breakdown of the multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions during the preparation of the report, the review of the SDGs is broken down thematically – People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships – providing a brief of the relevant SDGs associated.



People

Planet

Prosperity

Peace

Partnerships



PEOPLE

The Government of Palestine is committed to providing its citizens with the essential services to lead a healthy, and fulfilling life. The strain on the Palestinian government from the Israeli occupation is directly and indirectly translating into a deterioration in the living standards in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. Despite these strains and the continuous violations of the basic human rights of Palestinians, the State of Palestine continues to place great efforts in sustaining the remarkable national achievements in each one of the SDGs.





SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1 NO POVERTY



Achieving social justice and ending poverty is central to the National Policy Agenda – Leaving no one behind. Poverty reduction policies will focus on the development of appropriate and integrated social protection system that promote, empower and assures socioeconomic integration and employment for the poor, marginalized and most vulnerable in Palestinian society.

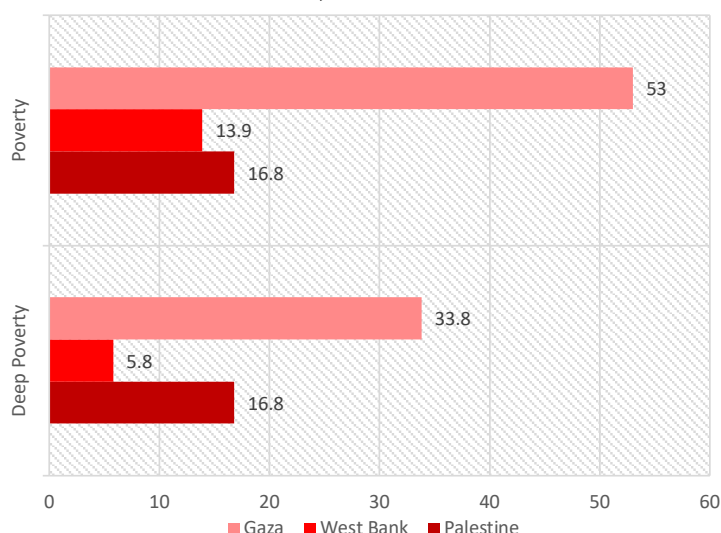


Poverty is a crosscutting and multidimensional problem that affects and intersects with virtually all other SDGs, where progress of reducing poverty levels is often a result of progress in other SDGs (See SDG 2, 8 and 10). Persons defined as living in Deep Poverty under the national definition of the ability to attain basic life necessities that are limited to food, shelter and clothing; while persons living in poverty under the national definition can attain basic services of education, healthcare and transportation in addition to the basic goods above. As of 2017, the poverty line translates to an expenditure of 2,470 NIS (\$692) per month for a family of two adults and three children, where the deep poverty line for the same family is a monthly expenditure of 1,974 NIS (\$553) or less ⁱⁱ.

According to the national definition, 29.2% of Palestinians live under the national poverty line as of 2017, 13.9% in the West Bank and 53% in the Gaza Strip, while 16.8% of Palestinians live in deep poverty, 5.8% in the West Bank and 33.8% in the Gaza Strip.

As for income poverty, 41.1% receive an income below the national poverty line (24.0% in the West Bank and 67.6% in the Gaza Strip) and 30.3% of Palestinians receive an income below the national extreme poverty line (15.1% in the West Bank and 54.9% in the Gaza Strip). This shows that income poverty in Palestine is higher than actual poverty. This indicates that Palestinians utilize their own means to reduce their poverty rather than

Poverty in Palestine



relying solely on income. Poverty rates are higher amongst Palestinian refugees, with 38.7% of families headed by a refugee are poor compared to 22.3% for ones headed by a non-refugee, which constitutes higher poverty rates in refugee camps where 45.4% of residents of refugee camps are considered poor. Rural areas experience a poverty rate of 29.4% while urban areas experience 18.7%. Poverty by gender is equal where 30.6% of families headed by females live in poverty, while 29.2% of families headed by male live in poverty; yet for income poverty 51.0% of families headed by women receive an income below the poverty line compared to 40.4% for males. Poverty in Palestine is on the rise due to a variety of socio-economic and political circumstances where poverty increased by 13.2% from 25.8% in 2011 and 29.3% in 2017 ⁱⁱⁱ.

Key challenges of eliminating poverty:

Poverty in Palestine is the result of a variety of political and socio-economic factors that are mostly the outcome of the combined effects of numerous Israeli policies. These include the inhuman Israeli blockade on Gaza; restrictions on trade and the control of international borders; the appropriation of Palestinian land; restrictions on planning and construction in Area "C"; physical destruction of infrastructure and development initiatives; confiscation of water and other natural resources; and the strict control of Palestinian movement for goods and people. Israel's unfair and unequal application of the Paris Protocol has debilitated Palestine's economy. Thus, the Palestinian economy finds itself in an enforced state of reliance on Israel, hampering economic growth and significantly contributing to increasing poverty rates and the cost of living affecting the most vulnerable groups in the Palestinian society.

Poverty rates in East Jerusalem have been exacerbated by the Wall, which has weakened social, commercial, economic, touristic, and institutional linkages between East Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine and led to the decline in the purchasing power of Palestinians. The Wall has specifically affected Palestinians who work in the agricultural or food trade sectors since the movement of goods between the West Bank and East Jerusalem has been severely restricted. The high cost of living for Jerusalemites, in comparison to other areas of Palestine, also contributes significantly to the high poverty rate among Palestinians living in East Jerusalem ^{iv}.

The economic blockade of Gaza has dramatically increased poverty rates, by cutting internal trade with the West Bank, denying Palestinians the ability to work outside of Gaza, and hindering Gaza's foreign trade with and via Israel. The situation has been further aggravated by the so-called "dual use" items list, which has limited access to production inputs and reconstruction materials.

Despite the efforts made, the adoption of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Palestine, persons with disabilities continue to live in a state of marginalization and social exclusion in many areas, especially women with disabilities. The realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and the achievement of social, economic and political integration have many challenges, including the lack of enforcement of laws and legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly those related to the compatibility of public spaces with the needs of persons with disabilities, the prevailing societal culture towards persons with disabilities, the inability of persons with disabilities to access and benefit from public services, and the limited programs for the training and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.



Government efforts:

The Palestinian government has prioritized poverty in its national policy agenda 2017 – 2022, due to the direct impact poverty has on the wellbeing of its citizens and the implications of high poverty rates on the wellbeing and social coherence for a society living under occupation. High poverty levels reduce the ability of Palestinians from accessing basic services and thus burdens the Palestinian government through costly direct interventions to alleviate poverty. The approach in poverty reduction relies on re-building the resilience of the poor and vulnerable households and empowering them economically^v.

The Government and its partners have made great efforts to provide social protection and promote the social and economic integration of persons with disabilities. In addition to support and raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, the government issued the disability card, which gives persons with disabilities a special set of packages that include special services and access to medical instruments. To increase the inclusivity of persons with disabilities the government supports vocational training programs and provide soft loans to persons with disabilities to help them create their own income-generating businesses. The Ministry of Social Development and its partners are reviewing the laws on the rights of persons with disabilities to amend and develop them to align with the International Convention on Persons with Disabilities.

Currently the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) is implementing a poverty alleviation program that directly transfers regular quarterly funds to the most poverty struck families in Palestine. The program currently serves as a safety net for those in extreme poverty and covers around 110,000 Palestinian families (of which 70,000 are in the Gaza Strip) with a total running cost of \$130 million annually. The program serves as the main source to the national poverty record through collecting socio-economic data of over 600,000 individuals. The MoSD is increasing the efficiency of the fund transfer program by digitizing the data management system, improving the targeting mechanism and its case management system to improve its interventions. Among the cash transfers beneficiaries are 36,000 elderly-headed households and 19,000 households headed by a person with disabilities. In this regard, the MoSD is also working to establish a social protection floor starting with allowances to the elderly and the disabled, and one of the MoSD's key projects has been a micro-credit lending scheme for the people with disabilities to generate income and facilitate social inclusion. To translate the MoSD's vision in investing in poor people to elevate poverty, MoSD's adopted a key poverty alleviation facility, supported by the Islamic Development Bank in cooperation with UNDP, has been the Deprived Families' Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP) to serve as a sustainable means of tackling poverty^{vi}. The program aims to lead people out of poverty through their own initiatives. Since its inauguration, DEEP provided grants, microcredit and other services for 27,827 impoverished households in West Bank and Gaza (73% males and 27% females). Among these households, DEEP provided income-generating projects for 15,000 households and created approximately 50,000 job opportunities for the deprived families.





Looking forward:

Poverty in Palestine will continue to rise as long as the Israeli military occupation to the land, people and resources of Palestine continues. The issue of poverty in Palestine will continue to dominate national agendas, coupled with the high level of population growth, mitigation measures will remain unsustainable unless the occupation ends. Additionally, international aid to Palestine has been on a sharp decline since 2011, severely affecting the Palestinian government's ability to undertake greater efforts for poverty reduction. The United States' decision to halt financial assistance to the Palestinian government and the dramatic reduction of aid to UNRWA will severely affect the socio-economic wellbeing of poor and vulnerable families, mainly the refugees.

Despite this, the Palestinian government is determined to widen its safety net and extend the reach of its services to ease the struggle of its citizens struck by poverty. The government is further developing its poverty records to further analyze the root cause of poverty in order to increase the efficiency of the poverty alleviation programs. The Palestinian government decided to establish a Unified Portal Gate for social assistance and social services for the purpose of coordination; this will serve to reduce inefficient spending and duplication in support programs particularly between civil society and the government. In addition, the government aims to expand economic and social integration programs for marginalized individuals, especially persons with disabilities. Moreover, to follow up the implementation of the Government's decision to adapt public buildings to the needs of persons with disabilities.

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2 ZERO HUNGER



The Government is committed to enhancing food security, promoting agriculture and developing rural communities as part of its efforts to build resilient societies.



Food insecurity in Palestine is largely characterized by the lack of financial ability to access food, which is highly linked to the prevalence of high poverty unemployment, and global warming; those obstacles are compounded by the restricted access by Israel to Palestinian's own natural resources, such as water and land, and trade. Food insecurity remains to be a major challenge in Palestine, particularly in the most vulnerable communities and groups, including Gaza, rural communities in the West Bank, refugees, Bedouins and women-headed households.

The state of food insecurity in Palestine remains high, where according to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale Index (FIES) between 2014-2016, 9.54% or half a million Palestinians are experiencing severe food insecurity, while according to national records, 8.9% are experiencing extreme food insecurity, and 13.6% are moderately food insecure. In Gaza, the 11 years of siege have raised food insecurity to worrying levels, where 18.7% of citizens experience severe food insecurity and 21% experience moderate food insecurity, compared respectively to 3.3% and 9.4% in the West Bank. As for the West Bank's rural

communities, which present 27% of the population, of which, 21% are still experiencing food insecurity. Marginalized groups are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and are disproportionately affected. In the West Bank 24.5% of women-led households are food insecure and 49.6% of women-headed households in Gaza are food insecure^{vii}, whereas for male-led households 15.3% and 46.1% are food insecure in respectively^{viii}. The occupation policies in area C has led to 79% of Bedouin households being food insecure.

High food insecurity has fed rising levels of malnutrition, where doctors have seen significant rises in malnutrition-related conditions. This includes a 60% increase in the number of underweight children and an 11% increase in the number of children between 9-12 month of age suffering from anemia. According to a national survey completed by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF in 2013, 10.3% of children aged 6-59 months suffer from stunting, and 4.5% are malnourished with vitamin and other mineral deficiencies^{ix}. Simultaneously, the study found that 22.1% of males and 23.1% of females are overweight which signals Double Burden of Malnutrition.

Dunum = 1,000 sqm

A strong agricultural sector is crucial for bolstering food security in Palestine, yet it operates below its expected productivity levels and has been in serious decline over the past two decades^x. The contribution of agriculture to GDP has declined from 8.5% in 2000 to below 3% in 2016, while employment in the agricultural sector declined from 14.1% to 7.4% in the same period^{xi}. The majority of farms have smallholdings, with 75% of them being below 10 dunum and 93% being below 30 dunum. Additionally, 78% of private farmland in Palestine is used for private consumption. The decreasing size of small agricultural holdings is partly due to the inheritance laws where the average size farm dropped from 18.6 dunum to 10.8 dunum.

Key challenges to ending hunger:

Palestinian food insecurity is overwhelmingly caused by the lack of Palestinian control over their natural resources as a result of the Israeli occupation and its continued inhuman siege of Gaza. In the West Bank, including Est Jerusalem, Israel’s illegal settlement expansion has led to the illegal appropriation of private and public Palestinian land, in many cases, to be harvested by Israeli settlers. The majority of Palestine’s fertile and productive farmland lies in Area C, which is comprised of 64% of the West Bank and under Israeli occupation, hence denying and restricting the access of Palestinians to their own lands. The completion of the Wall will result in a permanent loss of Palestinian agricultural land.

The percentage of agriculture, fishing, and hunting workers has declined dramatically since 2002 due to the difficulties faced by those industries where workers in those industries face daily acts of assault and closure by the Israeli occupying authority. Fishermen in Gaza are continuously assaulted by the Israeli occupation navy (1283 violations, of which 1193 were shooting incidents) while agriculture workers face restrictions in delivering their produce to market.

Israel’s control over Palestinian water resources as well as planning and building also prevents Palestinians from constructing the vital water storage and irrigation systems needed for agriculture. As a result, protected irrigated agriculture makes up just 2.3% of cultivated land in the West Bank, with the remaining being rain-fed with low yield^{xii}. As irrigated land is, on average, fifteen times more productive than rain-fed land, 2.3% of irrigated land contributes almost half of the West Bank’s total plant production^{xiii}. Palestine’s most fertile agricultural land, 85.2% of in the Jordan Valley is off-limits to Palestinians under various pretexts. It is estimated that regaining control of Area C and the Jordan Valley for full cultivation would add US\$1bn to the Palestinian GDP, an increase of 9%^{xiv}.

The siege of the Gaza Strip has also constrained access to farmland, where up to 35% of the agricultural areas in Gaza are off-limits as access restricted areas^{xv}. The situation has further deteriorated after the 2014 military aggression, during which almost one third of agricultural land was damaged, and much of the most fertile land has been contaminated by the explosive remnants^{xvi}. The combination of shocks and restrictions brought about by the siege have resulted in huge output and employment losses in Gaza’s agricultural industry, including the extensive destruction of agricultural property and products, and the undermining of the productive base^{xvii}. Likewise, as of 2016 Gazan fishing communities are granted access to only nine nautical miles of ocean from the coast^{xviii}, limiting them to shallow waters with inferior fish stocks (See SDG 14).

Combined with the unequal distribution of underground water resources between illegal Israeli settlements and Palestinian communities (See SDG 6), the change of water practices alongside climate change has resulted in a growing risk of desertification (See SDG 13). As most farmland relies on rainwater, changing weather patterns alongside restricted water access remains a major concern for the Palestinian government. This risks increasing food insecurity and increase dependence on food aid.

Workers in Agriculture



Government and Partners Efforts:

Despite the challenges faced by the Palestinian government and its partners alike a series of interventions were put in place to reduce food insecurity and monitor food's safety. The Palestinian government has put in place a national strategy to ensure the quality of food currently being consumed through monitoring to ensure the compliance with international standards for food quality and safety. The government and its partners are directly supporting farmers through the cultivation of 1850 hectares of land and the increase of irrigation water by 4.7 million square meters due to the use of dripping irrigation system and the treatment of sewage water. In addition, the government exempts farmers from paying income tax with a VAT refund program for farmer's working expenditure is underway. The Palestinian Agriculture Credit Institution was created in order to increase the investment in farming especially small farms and most impacted by the Israeli occupation. The Government has also adopted the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change and has initiated the implementation of the National Nutrition Monitoring Program for all segments of the community as a verification and investigation effort that will help to take action to improve the Palestinian nutritional status. The Ministry of Health has also launched the Child Friendly Clinic Initiative to promote awareness of the correct nutritional patterns for children, as well as the nutrition support program.

Looking forward:

Our vision for food security and hunger eradication depends on strengthening the interrelationship between agricultural development, social protection and economic development, which are addressed in the coherent and integrated National Policy Agenda 2017-2022. To enhance livelihoods and food security, and as part of its commitment to providing the basic needs of the population, contributing to their resilience, and building on its previous achievements, the Government and its partners will develop and enforce the national policy on food and nutrition security in Palestine. Efforts will continue to promote agriculture in rural communities by focusing on increasing livestock production, developing value chains, and strengthening programs to protect and support farmers, especially in the marginalized areas. Government and its partners prioritize its land reclamation programs, and water harvesting to increase irrigated agricultural areas. Investment in farming and the development of Agricultural safety nets will continue to support farmers, fishermen and women, as the sustainability of these two sectors is vital to food security, and the preservation of Palestinian cultural heritage.





SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



“Quality healthcare for all must be assured throughout all of Palestine”^{xix}. National Priority 9 of the NPA targets quality healthcare for all. The government is committed to reforming the public health insurance system, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of healthcare in Palestine through establishing a cost-effective approach to patient referrals and the procurement of medical services. Above all, improving the quality and availability of healthcare services, including infrastructure, equipment, medicines, the training of healthcare workers and general standards, is of the utmost importance. The NPA acknowledges that prevention is always better than cure. The government intends to strengthen preventative healthcare measures, including promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness, introducing a family health approach, and improving chronic disease management.



There have been tangible improvements on national health indicators during the last two decades. The average life expectancy has increased over the last 8 years reaching 73.7 (72.1 Males, 75.2 Females) as of 2016. Vaccination coverage has reached 99%, and contagious diseases are declining due to the efforts and interventions of the government and its partners. Since 1994, the Palestinian government has widened its healthcare coverage and capacities, evident by the rise in the number of primary healthcare clinics and their expanding coverage. The number of clinics increased by 63% from 454 in 1994 to 739 in 2016, where the government operates 64% of

primary care clinics and 54% of total hospital beds in Palestine - 27 hospitals with a total bed capacity of 3325 beds. Additionally, maternal mortality has decreased by 36% to reach 24.1 per 100,000. Child (under five years) mortality rates have also decreased to 22 per 1,000, while infant (less than one year old) mortality rates have decreased to 18.2 per 1,000.

However neonatal mortality (within 28 days from birth) still account for almost 2/3 of infant mortality and half of under-five child deaths, which could be prevented. In addition, 99% of births occurred under professional supervision and 95.5% of

pregnant women received medical anti-natal care (minimum of 4 medical visits throughout pregnancy). Contraception usage is still low, however, at 57.2% while exclusive breastfeeding is at 38.6% for the first 6 months.

Palestinian laws provide for the provision of health care to persons with disabilities and their free access to health services covered by governmental health insurance. A person with a disability is granted government health insurance if the disability rate is 60% or above. Persons with mental and psychiatric disabilities are also part of the government funded free public health insurance. To facilitate their access to health services, the Government has adapted all government hospitals to the needs of people with mobility disabilities and has worked to adapt primary health care centers. The Government and its partners provide medical assistive devices and tools, and provide rehabilitation, psychological and social support services. Despite efforts, persons with disabilities continue to face difficulties in accessing health care, especially women with disabilities, and persons with mental disabilities. Lack of adequate infrastructure for the needs of persons with disabilities, lack of specialized medical staff in the areas of disability, lack of mental health care services, and the difficult economic situation of persons with disabilities are all factors impeding their access to health care.

According to 2016 data, however, the number of doctors and specialized doctors remain low. There are currently 10,439 physicians in Palestine, (6,416 general physicians and 4,023 specialists, 21.7 physicians per 10,000 and 0.84 specialists per 10,000). Regarding nurses and midwives, the rates are also considered low, where there are 20.9 nurses per 10,000 and 2 midwives per 10,000.

While the Ministry of Health (MoH) and its partners made significant headway in combatting a number of infectious diseases, major challenges remain in combating and preventing the spread of certain communicable diseases including, hepatitis, brucellosis, tuberculosis, and meningitis. Non-communicable diseases remain a major public health challenge in Palestine, as cardiovascular diseases are the main cause of death in Palestine, followed by cancer and strokes. Non-communicable diseases are continuously increasing where reported cancer cases reached 2536 in 2016 an increase of 5.7% between 2015 and 2016. Road accidents in Palestine have also seen a dramatic rise between 2011 and 2016, where the number of deaths from road accidents increased from 3.8 to 5.3 per 100,000. Illicit drug use also remains an issue with 26,500 endangered addicts, where synthetic marijuana, tramadol and Lyrica are the most widespread illicit drugs. Additionally, the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions alongside increasingly aggressive Israeli occupational practices has also resulted in the higher demand and need for mental and psychosocial health services.

Key challenges to good health and wellbeing:

Despite the efforts of the MoH to improve the Palestinian healthcare system, violence and the policies of the Israeli occupation continues to put severe restrictions and strains on the well-being of Palestinians and development of Palestinian healthcare. Since the beginning of the March of Return, Israeli Occupying Forces killed 131 Palestinians and 14,000 injured. Serious injuries result in long-term disabilities and the need for continuous medical treatment, particularly as the majority of those injured are children or youth.

Preventative health in Palestine is strained by numerous environmental factors, which are consequences of the Israeli occupation, constituting a major health hazards. The restrictive planning and permit regime and the unequal water policies have resulted in poor water infrastructure and the inability of vulnerable communities to connect to the water network in Area C (See SDG 6). Furthermore, only 30% of Palestinians are connected to the sewage network, therefore leaving many vulnerable Palestinian households relying on cesspits, particularly in the Gaza Strip. As such, water contamination is a major issue in Gaza and the West Bank, water sources are increasingly contaminated from wastewater and pollution from illegal Israeli settlements and settlement industries. Food insecurity has also led to rising levels of malnutrition, where doctors have seen significant rises in malnutrition-related conditions (See SDG 2).

Israeli restrictions on construction have severely hindered the expansion of Palestinian health infrastructure in Area C and East Jerusalem, where the siege and continuous assaults on Gaza has limited the capacity for reconstruction leaving health infrastructure crumbling. The discriminatory Israeli permit and planning regime has meant that permits to expand or even renovate infrastructure is increasingly difficult, where hospitals in occupied East Jerusalem have attempted to cope through renting hotel rooms to ensure there are enough beds for Palestinian patients. Severely restrictive movement through a system of checkpoints, the wall and other barriers limit the ability of vulnerable Palestinians to access to necessary healthcare, particularly owing to the poorer healthcare provision in marginal areas, while simultaneously limiting the government and healthcare providers' ability to expand coverage and improve services in these areas. Six hospitals in occupied East Jerusalem provide the highest quality of healthcare in Palestine, however many Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are unable to reach such services as they require prior Israeli approval for travel. In October 2017, as many as 45% of patient applications to access health care outside of Gaza were rejected by Israel, the occupying power.



The healthcare system in the Gaza Strip suffers the most destruction and debilitation, as health care providers are struggling to cope with the deteriorating living conditions alongside the limited equipment and infrastructure. Restrictions on imports to Gaza extend to essential medical supplies and equipment where of 516 medications on the essential drug list, 223 (43%) were at zero stock levels in November 2017, of which 198 were completely depleted. The lack of essential medicines coupled with the inability for patients in need to seek adequate treatment outside has resulted in a health crisis in Gaza, where hospitals continue to struggle without regular electricity and the lack of clean available water.

These challenges have resulted in a strained ability of the MoH to address the extensive health needs of citizens, particularly as the challenges are ongoing effects of the occupation. As the major cause of death in Palestine are from non-communicable diseases, the MoH spends around 80% of its budget on initiatives to combat non-communicable diseases, constituting a major burden on its resources due to the increase in population and the reduction in external funding to the healthcare system. Additionally, a significant

portion of the national health budget is used to fund medical referrals for Palestinian patients to neighboring and international specialized hospitals. This strain on resources has also aided the limited capacity of the MoH to fulfill the health requirements and coverage for citizens.

Achievement within this goal will remain limited unless efforts of other sectors are also mobilized to help achieve health outcomes. It is vital to work hand in hand with the Ministry of Finance to improve the overall performance of health financing and the Ministries of Labor, Education and Social Development on relevant health related matters. Health priorities also need to be factored into poverty alleviation strategies.



Looking forward:

As a part of the NPA, the Palestinian government is committed to “Quality Healthcare for All”, which entails the continuation of MoH efforts to strengthen the health system in Palestine while focusing on the WHO framework which is in line with the national health plan 2017-2022.

The MoH is committed to widening its specialty coverage network and localizing services to reduce its budget for referring special cases to hospitals abroad and create local specialized healthcare coverage through partnership with the hospitals in East Jerusalem. This includes: widening primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services and improving health access especially in vulnerable areas especially to persons with disabilities both physical and mental, residents in Area C, and improve maternal and sexual health; providing quality free drug rehabilitation services to all drug abusers; and implementing international standards for healthcare. To combat the detrimental health effects of the Israeli occupation, partnerships between the civil society, private sector, government and international organizations like the UNRWA are the cornerstone of providing quality healthcare.

Preventive health and promoting healthy living are key national priority policies for promoting wellbeing and reducing the strain on the healthcare system, complemented with the implementation of a family practice approach. This approach aims to further improve primary healthcare delivery system and reduce communicable and non-communicable diseases by improving community health and health awareness. The government hopes to support healthy lifestyle and promote healthy practices in an attempt to reduce reliance on health services and to increase life expectancy.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Ensuring a good and inclusive education is the eighth national priority in the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022. The Government seeks to build and maintain the achievements of Palestine in education. The Government is committed to working with its partners to improve early childhood education, improve attendance and retention rates for both sexes, improve the quality of school education, and facilitate youth transition from education to work.

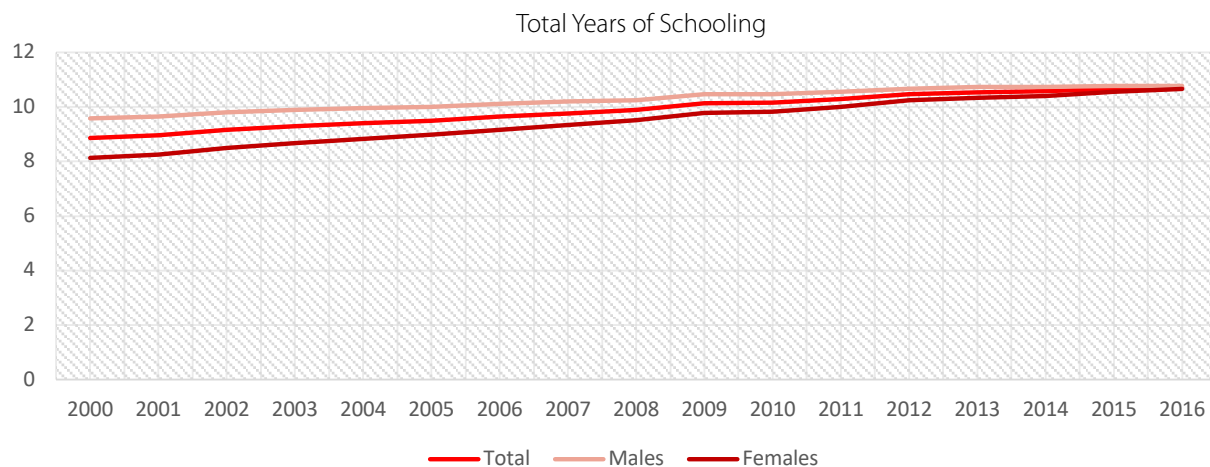


Education is a core of Palestinian value, and the Palestinian government shares this view with its citizens that education is a tool for empowerment and resilience. Hence, it provides free primary and secondary education for all, and has ratified “Education Law 2017” - a mandatory minimum of 10 years of schooling for all its citizens. The provision of net school enrolment rates in 2016 was 98.2% for primary education (1-4), 98% for upper basic education (5-10) and 63% for secondary education (11-12). Pre-schooling enrolment has also increased by 50.7% between 2012 and 2016, reaching 56%, while the enrolment rates for students aged one year before entry into basic education is 75%. For children with disabilities the enrolment rate was 32.5% in 2011 between ages 6-9, while for children ages 10-15 the enrolment rate was 69.8%. Persons with disabilities remain left behind in the educational system, where illiteracy rates amongst person with disabilities is 31.7% (34% in West Bank and 29% in Gaza Strip) as of 2017, and 4.5% (3.8 in West Bank and 5.4% in Gaza Strip) of whom have completed university education. Attendance rates of persons with disabilities particularly ones with hearing disabilities, autism, and mild learning disability remain low due to the incapability of the ministry of Education of attending to their

needs. Enrolment in vocational and technical education remains low at 2.6% and approximately 25.8% of youth, aged 18-24 are enrolled in higher education institutions.

Since 1995, literacy rates have risen from 84.9% to 97% in 2016, and approximately 30% of Palestinian students are IT literate as they can use basic IT programs to complete education-related tasks. This was achieved through the efforts placed in providing education through conventional schooling as well as unconventional methods were used for sick students in hospitals, prisoners in Israeli jails and those under Israeli-imposed home arrests.

The gender gap in education has been bridged, where the number of females who are enrolled in education has surpassed males where 96.6% of males and 99% of females are enrolled in compulsory education. As for higher education graduates, of the total graduates 40% are males compared to 60% females, this trend continue to postgraduate degrees with males postgraduates making only 43% and females 57%, the difference is attributed to males joining the workforce prior to the completion of their education.



Key challenges to quality education:

Despite the efforts exerted by the Palestinian government and its partners, quality education and the ability of the government to create safe and conducive learning spaces remains threatened. Going to school for many students and teachers substantially increase the risk of their safety as students and teachers are subjected to abuse and attacks by Israeli occupation and settlers within the school premises and on route at checkpoints and military outposts, which they must cross to reach school. This is in addition to the continued illegal detentions, arrests and harassment of students and educational staff by the Israeli occupation, inside and outside the classroom. Students living in Area C can be forced to walk up to 5km to reach their schools, additionally, 60 schools in Area C remain at risk of demolition owing to the restrictive planning and permit regime.

In years 2017, a total of 95 violations were recorded against Palestinian educational facilities in which the Israeli occupation forces killed 9 Palestinian students and 1 teacher, injured 603 students and 55 teachers and illegally detained 1370 students and 257 teachers in addition to the periodical halting of education at these facilities. As such, the violence and abuse many Palestinian students and teachers face from Israeli occupation soldiers and settlers inside and on the route to classrooms have created a physical and psychological barrier for students to seek education and has greatly affected their academic achievements.

Schools in Gaza are particularly suffering from overcrowdedness, dilapidated infrastructure, and a poor learning environment. The average number of students per classroom is 36.3 in Gaza, compared with 30.3 in the West Bank. The 2014 Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, caused damage to 148 schools, where the Israeli-imposed obstacles on the import of construction materials have impeded school reconstruction. The resulting acute shortage of classrooms in Gaza has led to more than 85% of schools functioning on a double-shift basis.

In East Jerusalem, many Palestinian schools are managed under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Ministry of Education, these schools are attended by 51% of Palestinian students. Falling under the Israeli jurisdiction, the Palestinian curriculum is under threat, where the Israeli Ministry of Education has used coercive financing tactics to introduce the Israeli curriculum in many Palestinian schools. Israel restricts the rehabilitation of schools run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, which intensifies the shortage of adequate classrooms. This has caused many Palestinian students to shy away from learning the Israeli curriculum as it suppresses Palestinian identity and culture. The inability of the Palestinian government to access these schools has also resulted in the inability of the government to protect these schools from the numerous human rights violations and discriminatory Israeli policies that targets Palestinians.

External challenges to the Palestinian education system, such as the Israeli occupation policies and practices, are extremely volatile with a tangible impact on issues such as financing and the politicization of aid. The recent volatility of aid owing to the decreased US support for UNRWA has resulted in 370 schools with 319,188 students and 11,660 teachers in West Bank and Gaza will be affected in addition to the decrease in direct funding to the Palestinian government. Internal challenges include the lack of sufficient numbers of qualified technical employees, the brain drain of skilled staff owing to the challenging living conditions decrease the ability the government to deliver better results and higher educational standards. The Education ministry's implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy faces a number of challenges, namely: shortage of specialized staff in dealing with disabilities, lack of availability of resource rooms where 123 rooms operate in 1800 public schools; inadequate adaptation of schools to the needs of persons with mobility disabilities, which constitute 65% of school.



Government and Partners Efforts:

The Palestinian government has prioritized education as a mean for supporting resilience in the face of the Israeli occupation. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) launched an inclusive education policy in order to integrate all students, regardless of their disabilities. In addition to training the educational staff to attend to persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has set up three resource centres, equipped 123 resource rooms for persons with disabilities, provided textbooks in Braille language, and launched the Peer Support and Guidance Initiative through the formation of the Friends of Students with Disabilities Committee. Actions are currently underway to further develop a curriculum for students with disabilities in addition to creating action plans to deliver education to students at home. The government also provides home schooling for students that the Israeli occupation put on house arrest.

In terms of curriculum development, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has completed the development of school curricula for grades 1-12. It has also launched a guide for pre-school preschool educators and is opening kindergartens in public primary schools, especially in marginalized areas, to increase enrollment rates for children in pre-school education.

In higher education, the Palestinian government is granting scholarships for students with outstanding achievement via the National Student Fund. Additionally, in order to improve enrolment in vocational and technical education, a number of policies and measures were adopted to integrate vocational and technical education (TVET) into general education (grades 7-9). The goal of this integration is to improve students' attitudes towards vocational education, in general, and provide them with basic life skills.



To ensure achieving high enrolment rates and quality education, the Palestinian government is also committed to training its teachers and developing their professional capacities; thus, 57% of teachers are qualified in accordance to the national Teacher Education Strategy, while 65% are enrolled in continuing professional development. Moreover, the MoEHE is implementing a green school system where solar panels have been installed on 297 school rooftops to provide clean energy to the school and to reduce energy costs so that more investments can be made towards enhancing the quality and access to education.

Looking forward:

Despite the ongoing challenges to delivering quality education for all, the Palestinian government is pursuing a bold agenda for young Palestinians that seek to empower and equip youth to meaningfully participate in public life and state-building. The

government is determined to ensure that children and young people from all genders are provided with the opportunities they need for a successful future at every stage of education. To achieve its vision of ensuring quality and inclusive education for all, the Government and its partners will improve pre-school education through the development of early childhood care programs and the expansion of pre-school education in public schools. To maintain and improve the quality of education, the Government and its partners will continue to develop educational facilities adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities, rehabilitate and develop school curricula, train teachers and support staff, develop e-learning programs and bridge the education gap between marginalized areas, "C" and the rest of Palestine. To facilitate the transition from education to work, the Government will promote the alignment of education and vocational training with labour market needs to reduce the high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people. (See SDG 8).

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



The NPA has identified ending gender inequality as a national policy; therefore, the Palestinian government is committed to ending gender inequality by removing structural barriers that hinder women's participation in all forms in public and economic life.



Achieving gender equality catalyzes achievements in reducing poverty, unemployment, attaining sustainable economic growth and reducing inequalities. In recent years, Palestine has achieved advancement in gender equality through the signing by the State of Palestine of the CEDAW agreement without reservations, as well as a number of international conventions, especially in human rights, constituting a framework for promoting women's rights and gender equality. The formation of a legislative committee headed by the Minister of Justice to harmonize local legislation with the international agreements signed by Palestine. The government endorsed UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and an operational strategy was put in place for its implementation. On the other hand, a series of laws and legislations have been reviewed and developed in accordance with international conventions which promote the rights of women, especially at work, political participation and in public life.

Despite these achievements in education and health, violence against women remains a critical issue

facing Palestinian women. As of 2011, 37% of women reported violence from their partners, while 16% of unmarried women reported violence from a family member. Psychological violence accounts for 59% of reported cases, physical violence accounts for 23%, and sexual violence accounts for 10%. Women in Gaza are particularly at risk of violence against them as 51% are affected, while in the West Bank 30% of women are affected. Child marriages, however, have reduced to 20.5% in 2016 from 33% in 2003. As for women between ages (20-24), 15% of whom got married before age of 18 as of 2014, the number was reduced to 11% in 2017. Other harmful practices in against women like female genital mutilation are not reported or present in the Palestinian society.

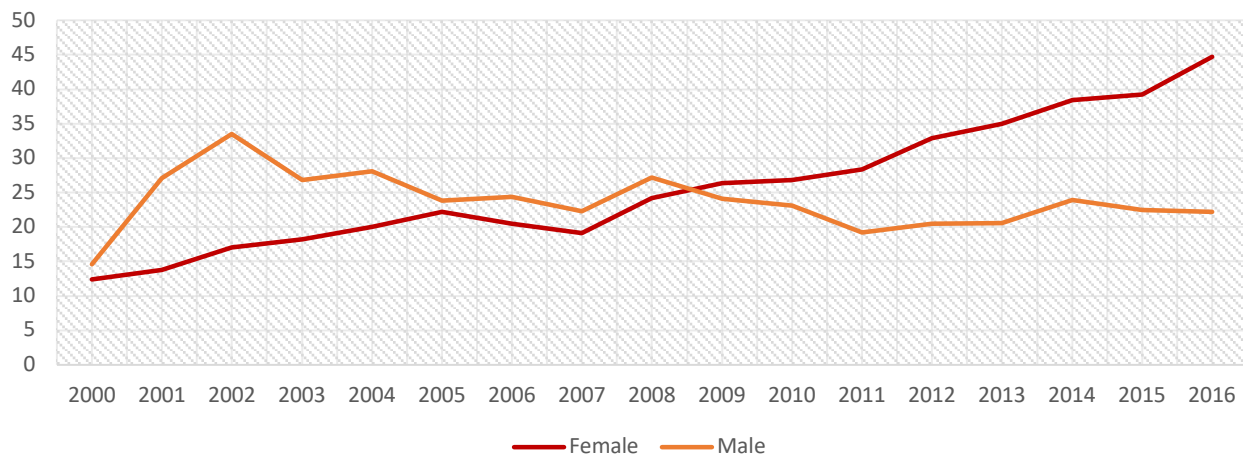
Although Palestinian women have achieved high education levels, surpassing their male counterparts, (See SDG 4) only 19% of Palestinian women participate in the labor market (See SDG 8). The remaining 81% engage in unpaid domestic work. Unemployment amongst women remains very high with an unemployment rate of 47.5% as of 2017. Additionally,

one of the highest unemployment rates is amongst young female graduates, of whom 72% are unemployed compared to 37.8% of young male graduates. Only 4% of young women completed the transition from education to the labor market.

The government and its partners are promoting entrepreneurship and encouraging the youth to set up their own businesses. The Ministry of Economy records shows that the proportion of women registered in the Commercial

Register did rise from 5% in 2015 to 8.3% in 2017. On the other hand, in terms of women’s participation in public life and decision-making, women currently occupy 12.7% of the seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council, 5.8% of the ambassadors of the State of Palestine abroad, 20% of the seats of the local councils, 17.3% of the judges, and 12.4% of the members of student councils in the West Bank. Women hold 46% of the civil service jobs, 11.9% of the positions of Director General and 23.6% of the Director.

Unemployment rate based on gender



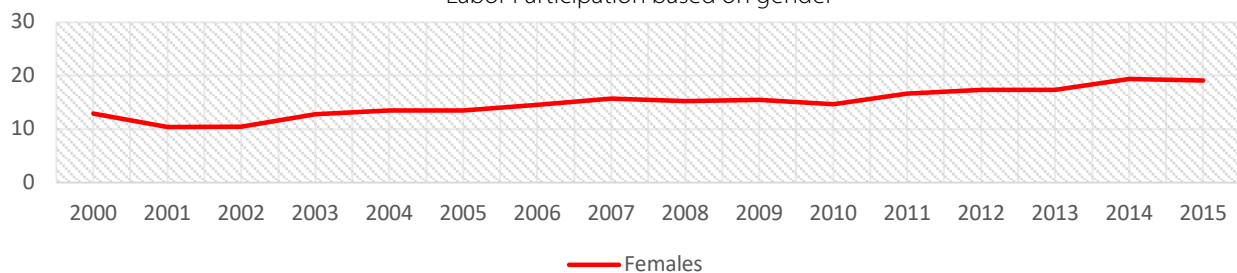
Key Challenges to gender equality:

While Palestinian society and history are indebted to the incredible achievements and sacrifice of Palestinian women in supporting and leading the quest for freedom and independence, the patriarchal society and traditional gender roles continue to impede greater achievements in attaining gender equality and women’s participation in the workforce. Women often are expected to juggle numerous domestic and/or work responsibilities despite recognition of their rights to equal treatment and equity. This inhibits women from successfully participating in the labor market, particularly young women who may have additional expectations including marriage and children. The time use survey for 2013 showed that females aged 10 years and over spend an average of 3 hours and 42 minutes in domestic work for one hour and 17 minutes for males. Working women spend the same time in domestic work activities at a rate of 3 hours and 40 minutes, compared to 1 hour and 17 minutes for men, indicating that the work of women outside the home did not affect their domestic work.

In addition to the weak implementation of laws and legislations, and the limited implementation of policy commitments, and despite the decision of the Council of Ministers that gender should be taken into consideration in planning and budgeting, the consideration of gender remains limited. Since the ratification by Palestine of the CEDAW agreement and the preparation of Palestine’s first report, the harmonization of national legislation with CEDAW has not been achieved and is delayed. The disparity between the West Bank and Gaza Strip’s laws and legislation adds to the challenge of promoting gender equality in the Palestinian society.

The discriminatory and destructive policies and practices of the Israeli occupation disproportionately affect Palestinian women, especially those affected by home demolition, land confiscation and restricted water and electricity supply in East Jerusalem and so called area “C” (See SDG 6, 7, and 9). The occupation policies obstruct the access of Palestinian women to justice, especially in area C and East Jerusalem.

Labor Participation based on gender



Looking forward:

The Palestinian Government is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls. It will use an inclusive approach, which will incorporate women in the planning, budgeting and policy development process in order to institutionalize and mainstream gender equality throughout government plans and institutions. The Government seeks to further promote the integration of women into all spheres of social, economic and political life and to remove all obstacles to women's inclusion through reforming and developing laws and regulations to reduce discrimination against women and take the necessary measures to ensure their implementation.

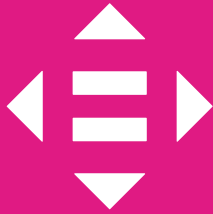
In addition, the Palestinian government is committed to working to develop safety nets for abused women and to adopt and enforce the Family Protection Act against violence and work to develop and enforce regulations to reduce child marriages.





SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



The government is also committed to reducing inequalities between Palestinians through the continuation of providing quality education and healthcare. All sections of the NPA leave no doubt that targeting marginalised and vulnerable groups for social development and inclusion programmes – including the disabled, youth, women, ex-prisoners, and bridging geographical inequalities - will remain a key priority for the Palestinian government during the implementation of the NPA 2017-2022^{xx}.



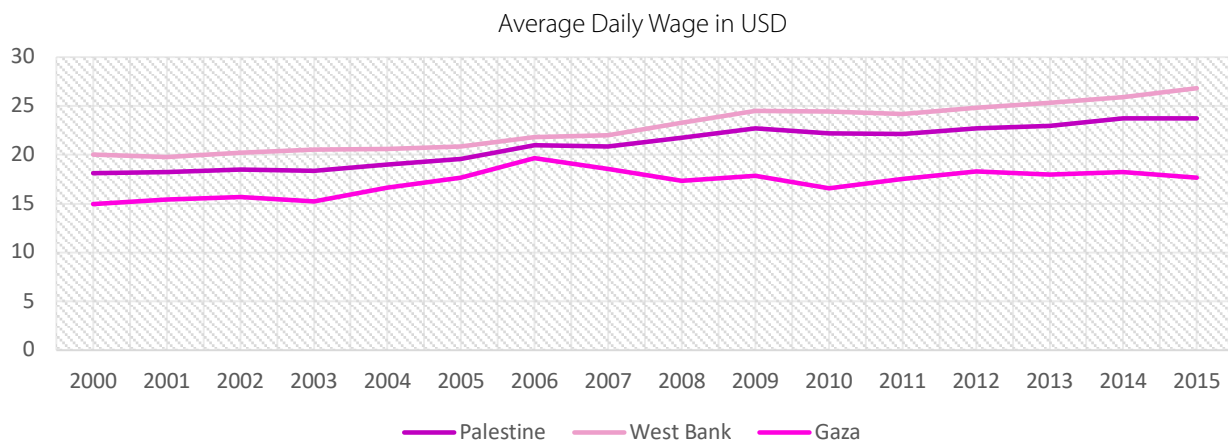
The government and its partners have already made advances in reducing inequality in education and healthcare (see SDG 3 and 4). Palestine's GINI coefficient, the most commonly used measure of inequality, stood at 35.5 in 2009, suggesting reasonably high human development on par with Middle Eastern neighbours, yet inequalities are noticeable especially between geographically divided areas.

However, inequality in Palestine takes many different dimensions across a range of intersecting factors, suggesting that this number varies widely according to different Israeli occupation restrictions. Israeli occupation policies have had a severe impact on intra-Palestinian inequality, which is often characterized by large gaps between those living in Areas A and B (under partial control of the Palestinian government), and those living in Area C (controlled by Israeli military occupation) or in the besieged Gaza Strip. Citizens who reside in the Gaza Strip are 3.8 more likely to live in poverty than in the West Bank. While women and persons with disabilities experience high levels of income inequality than the rest of the population. Data indicates that existing inequalities in the occupied Palestinian territory are

increasing. Currently, the richest 20% of the Palestinian population controls approximately 43% of the wealth, while the poorest 20% hold just 7%.

The siege on Gaza has created immense disparities in income between the Gaza Strip and West bank, where an average salary in the West Bank is 51% higher than that of an average salary in the Gaza Strip. The average salary in the west bank increased by 34% from a daily \$20 USD in 2000 to \$26.8 USD in 2015. While the Gaza Strip the daily wage increase by only 17% from a daily \$15 USD to \$17.6 USD.

The ability to access services extremely defers between the rural and urban areas in Palestine, and between the West Bank and Gaza. Even within these areas, access to virtually all services provided by the government is hindered by Israeli restrictions and the ability of Palestinians to pay for better quality services. As a result, service provision is often reasonable in Areas A and B, and extremely poor in areas outside the control of the Palestinian government, primarily for communities located in Area C. (See SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7).



To reduce the impact of disability on equality in the Palestinian society, it is vital to ensure that children who experience development delays and disability have access to early detection and interventions which can help them reach their full potential. This requires specific support and services to ensure that their rights and needs are met, including their right to education, health and social potential. It remains challenging for the Palestinian government to enact the child and disability laws, mainstream programmes and services designed to ensure disability and learning difficulty detection and child development.

In the case of occupied Jerusalem, enforced racial and religious inequality between Israelis and Palestinians are also exacerbated by poor service provision. The de facto responsibility for services lies with Israel's so called "Jerusalem Municipality" since its illegal annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, but it has historically underserved Palestinian areas. For example, in East Jerusalem: there is a shortage of 2200 classrooms and 30 km of sewage pipes, only 64% of Palestinian households are connected to the water network. Furthermore, Jerusalem neighbourhoods, located outside the Wall, on the West Bank side, receive little or no services from the Israeli municipality.

Looking forward:

Parallel to the Government's commitment to end the inequality created by the Israeli occupation, the Government is committed to reducing inequalities among Palestinians by increasing employment and implementing the policies in the Sixth National Priority "Economic Independence", which will reduce wealth inequalities (see SDG 8). It will also promote social integration of marginalized groups, including disabled people, youth, women and liberated prisoners. The government aims to bridge the development gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the implementation of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip plan, and bridge the disparities between women and men through empowering women to participate fully in work and public life.



PLANET

The State of Palestine will continue to uphold a strong commitment to its environment and all related international agreements signed by its government. The protection of the environment and the sustainability of natural resources is a Palestinian national priority. However, the ability of the Palestinian government to safeguard its environment is directly linked to its lack of control over its resources and so called area C, in addition to the Israeli occupation's unsustainable use of Palestinian resources and landscapes for disposal of its hazardous waste, while denying access for Palestinians to use, protect and develop their own natural resources. Nevertheless, with the assistance of international partners, the Palestinian government continues to improve the management of available resources towards reducing the erosion of resilience of Palestinian communities, land and water.





SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Meeting the basic needs of our Palestinian communities is a national priority, and the Palestinian government is committed to expanding access to safe water and sanitation. To this end, the Palestinian government will develop its water management, protection and sustainable use of available resources. The government is also committed to expanding wastewater management, treatment, and reuse, in line with sustainable environmental and social commitments.



Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is an integral part of sustainable development in the Palestinian context. As the essential need for enhancing food security, health and wellbeing of citizens (see SDG 2, 3 and 14), and the resilience of Palestinian communities in the face of water confiscation and intensifying climate change (See SDG 13), becomes more prevalent.

Even though 91% of communities are connected to public piped water networks, irregular water supply and intermittent access to piped water is widespread in both West Bank and Gaza. As such, many Palestinians survive with less than the World Health Organisation recommended water consumption guidelines of 120 litres per day per person. The average Palestinian connected to the water network consumes around 78 litres a day, in some areas in the West Bank; the consumption can be as little as 38 litres per day (in the case of Jenin Governorate) and as little as 20 litres a day for Palestinian communities in Area C.

Moreover, on average, 99.7% of the Palestinian population have access to improved unshared sanitation (99.6 % in West Bank and 99.9% in Gaza), while 55% of Palestinians are connected to a public sanitation system with 36.7% in the West Bank and 85.5% in the Gaza Strip; 94.6% in refugee camps; 60.6% of urban areas while only 12.2% of rural areas. Wastewater quantities generated in Palestine are estimated at 150 MCM, of which only 60% are collected. Current availability of centralized and decentralized wastewater treatment plants is treating only 25% of the generated wastewater, where only 1% of the treated wastewater is reused for agricultural purposes.

Water is also central to Gaza's current humanitarian crisis. Since the most recent hostilities in 2014, 1.2 million people in Gaza (approximately 2/3 of Gaza's population) have no running water and there is insufficient electricity to treat or pump out sewage. The Coastal Aquifer, which supplies virtually all of Gaza's water, is being pumped at three times its

sustainable capacity resulting in seawater and raw sewage contamination. Currently, 97% of the water drawn from the aquifer is undrinkable, and only 10% of Gaza's population has access to safe drinking water. As a result, contaminated water and a lack of sanitation are responsible for 26% of all disease in Gaza (See SDG 3). Without proper treatment, the pollution will become irreversible by 2022. As a result, 85% of Palestinian in Gaza are reliant on private desalination services, which charge up to five times the cost of water from municipal networks. Less than half of these services are licensed, and 68% of water from these services is contaminated throughout either production, transportation or home storage.

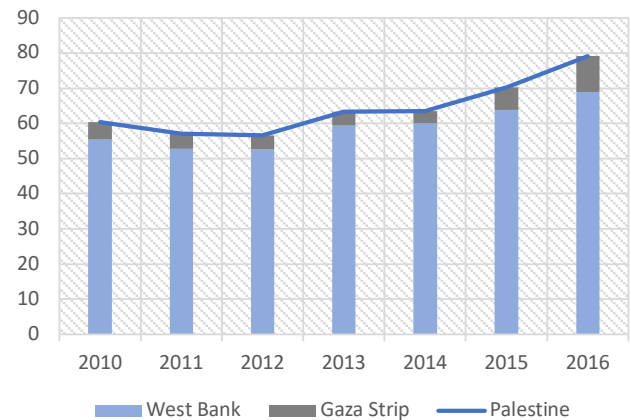
Key challenges to clean water and sanitation:

After the Israeli military occupation in 1967, Israel annulled all land and water-related arrangements that existed prior to the occupation, and illegally granted itself authority of Palestine's water resources. As a result, developing water resources in Area C, including wells and rainwater storage as well as connecting to the water network requires a permit from the Israeli occupation named "Civil Administration". The water network for Palestinians living in the West Bank is outdated, inefficient, and in urgent need of upgrading. As much as 34% of piped water in Palestine is lost to leakages due to an old and inefficient network. Palestinian communities not connected to the grid, or facing intermittent supply, are forced to buy tanked water from private dealers at a hugely inflated cost.

Israel's control over the West Bank's water allocation has resulted in the Palestinian share being capped at 1995 levels, despite a doubling in population size. This has resulted in a grossly unequal and increasingly widening distribution gap between Israelis and Palestinians. While Israel initially controlled 83% of the water coming from the shared Mountain Aquifer (with Palestine receiving 17%), the percentage allocated to Palestine has shrunk to 13% while Israel's allocation has ballooned to 87% despite 85% of water refilling the Mountain Aquifer occurs within Palestine. This unjust and unequal access to water seriously violates international law and hinders the development of the Palestinian economy, particularly the agricultural sector.

The unequal water distribution has resulted in a grave financial burden for the Palestinian government, where to meet the current and future population needs; water must be purchased from the Israeli national water carrier. Palestine purchases 70 MCM annually, where this number is expected to increase to 106 MCM by the year 2022. This gross inequality has also resulted in huge disparities in water consumption between illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Palestinians. Average consumption in illegal Israeli settlements is an enormous 369 litres per day. In total, the 636.5 thousand Israeli settlers living in

Quantity of Water Purchased From Israeli Water Company



the West Bank consume more water than the Palestinian population of 2.88 million.

Poor wastewater treatment by Israeli settlers, and the inability for Palestine to strengthen national wastewater treatment due to the Israeli occupation restrictions, poses significant threats to Palestinian health and environment, where according to the Palestinian Water Authority, 91mcm a year of wastewater flow in the West Bank, and illegal settlements produce twice the wastewater of Palestinian communities, constituting 38% of wastewater that flows in the West Bank. In addition, 5.5mcm of settlements' wastewater flows untreated into West Bank streams and valleys per year.

In Gaza the siege has disabled the government and its partners to construct the necessary water desalination and wastewater treatment facilities to increase the access of clean water and sanitation for the 1.9 million citizens in Gaza. In some cases where the necessary infrastructure has been built, for example the largest seawater desalination plant constructed last year, suffers from the lack of electricity in the Gaza Strip (see SDG 7). The result of the severely interrupted electricity supply has hindered the capacity of desalination and water treatment centres to operate at the necessary capacity.



Government efforts:

The Palestinian Water Authority leads the water, sanitation and hygiene sector through the development of the National Water and Wastewater Sector Strategy (2013- 2032). The National Water Strategy provides the planning and management framework necessary for the protection, conservation, and sustainable management of water resources. The strategy aims to reinforce the Palestinian's approach to sustainable water resources management by ensuring that all arms of government work together in the pursuit of shared water resources management goals. As part of this strategy, the government has established a framework for the coordinated development, regulation and financial sustainability of water supply and wastewater services to ensure concerted efforts towards improved water and wastewater system management, rehabilitation and maintenance.

Looking forward:

As part of its efforts to implement this goal, and in coordination with its partners to ensure the right of all citizens to have access to safe water and sanitation services. The Government will focus its efforts on improving the overall, integrated and sustainable management of water resources through the development and expansion of water infrastructure, the completion of the legal and regulatory framework for the establishment and operation of water providers, and the promotion of water conservation programs. To strengthen wastewater management, treatment and reuse, the government will develop and expand the infrastructure of sewage networks as well as build, rehabilitating and further expanding existing wastewater treatment plants to increase dependence on treated water for agriculture.





SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



The government, through its national policy agenda, is committed to expanding the connectivity of communities to reliable energy sources by increasing energy efficiency and expanding the use of renewable energy sources. The energy sector is one of the most promising and attractive sectors for domestic and foreign investments, as the government seeks to strengthen its sovereignty over this sector and increase energy production.

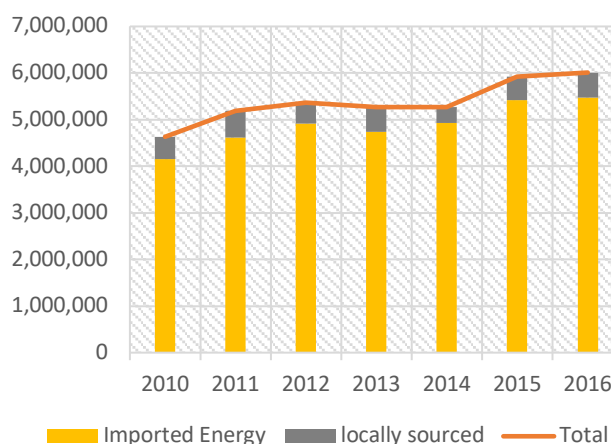


Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all remains a key challenge for the Palestinian government, particularly in Gaza and in the hard-to-reach areas where Palestinian sovereignty is constrained. While 99% of Palestinian households are connected to the public electricity network, the quality and supply of constant electricity vary based on the available infrastructure. Up to 26% of energy is lost in transit due to poor infrastructure and theft, and 15% could easily be saved if energy were transported and used more efficiently. As a result, energy access inequalities are largely determined by location and infrastructure's quality. In Area C, for example, where construction is barred, Palestinian communities face higher chances of poor quality and intermittent electricity supplies. Additionally, 118 of the 157 Bedouin communities in Area C have no access to the electricity grid.

Of the total available energy in Palestine, approximately 91% is imported, 8% is purchased from the Palestine Electric Company and 1% is from self-generation and renewable energy. Of total electricity imports, Palestine is forced to import 97% from Israel's Electric Corporation (99% in the West

Bank and 86% in Gaza). As Palestinians are treated as Israeli customers where the standard of living is significantly higher, and not as an export market, the cost of electricity in Palestine is the highest in the Arab world. As a result, fuel costs are increasingly unaffordable, where Palestinian households spend 10% of their average income on energy, five times that of Lebanon and Jordan^{xxi}.

Quantity of Available Electricity (MWh)



Palestine's sole power generation facility, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), reduces the need for Israeli imports in Gaza, however, is struggling to meet the needs of Palestinians in Gaza owing to expensive fuel imports. In addition, the division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip results in the electricity revenues not being transferred to the Ministry of Finance. At best, less than 45% of electricity demand in Gaza is currently met, and daily power cuts last 21 hours in some areas. Shortages in power supply have led to the breakdown of medical equipment in hospitals, and an inability to run water pumps (See SDG 6). Frequent power cuts have also undermined the Palestinian private sector in Gaza, especially Gaza's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which cannot afford to have their own generators (See SDG 8). Up to 90% of factories report that they may cease production as they have been operating at less than 20% of their capacity^{xxii}.

Key challenges to affordable and clean energy:

Palestine relies heavily on Israel to meet its energy requirements as a direct result of the Israeli occupation's restrictions on the construction of power plants and the blockade imposed on Gaza. Israel's energy imports resulted in an accumulation and increase in the volume of debts owed to the Israel Electric Corporation (IEC), Israel deducts these debts from the tax revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian government. These deductions increasing the burden and sustainability of the Palestinian government's finances and diverting funds away from its investment in improving local electricity generation capabilities.

The Palestinian government has taken many measures to increase electricity bills collection rates, through the installation of pre-paid meters, national electricity debt remains an issue. In 2017, deductions from clearance revenues amounted to 9.2% of the Palestinian government's total revenues. Moreover, high dependency on Israel for electricity makes Palestinians very vulnerable to arbitrary cuts of the power supply, especially in the case of unpaid electricity bills. In 2015, Israel cut power to towns in the West Bank, including the major cities of Nablus and Jenin, at least once because of unpaid electricity bills.

Despite the Oslo Accords promising negotiations on transferring the responsibility for energy generation from Israel to the Palestinian government, to date only the Gaza Strip has taken responsibility for their own energy generation, as per the 2005 disengagement plan. A lack of investment in new energy infrastructure leads to significant waste caused by dilapidated systems. The latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza in 2014 has further weakened the limited capacity of the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) where it has been systematically targeted by Israel airstrikes, where alongside the heavy reliance on fuel imports, caused a major electricity

crisis. In the West Bank, authorization from the Israeli occupation named "Civil Administration" is still necessary for setting up new connection points or increasing the capacity of existing ones and approval for installing new electricity lines in Area C is extremely difficult. Currently, Israeli occupation authorities have denied all requests for the legal construction of power grids in Area C, and continue to demolish unapproved energy infrastructure.

Israeli restrictions have also prevented the Palestinian government from exploiting gas reserves discovered off the coast of Gaza, which could yield millions of dollars of tax revenue, create jobs and contribute to Palestine's self-sufficiency. The reserves are estimated to house more than 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas, which studies have suggested are economically feasible.

Government efforts:

Palestine signed and ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the 22nd April 2016. Despite the enormous challenges posed by the Israeli military occupation, the government is currently targeting the gradual production of 240MW using renewable energy sources, totalling 10% of total electricity produced locally, and 25% of the total energy consumption in Palestine by 2020. In particular, there is a strong potential for the development of solar energy, with a daily average solar radiation of 5.4kWh/m². As large-scale infrastructure projects are often stalled or halted by Israeli restrictions, much of the investments in renewable energy have been at a smaller scale at the household and/or community level. For example, the Palestinian Investment Fund and the MoEHE have invested \$35 million in the installation of solar PV on the roofs of 500 public schools (see SDG 3). The Palestinian government with its partners are expanding the reach of the electricity network and capacity to absorb the pressure of the high population growth in Palestine while expanding into renewable energy to ensure sustainability of future resources.

Looking forward:

Palestine aims to strengthen its energy sovereignty and end the enforced reliance on expensive Israeli power. The NPA commits the government to working towards expanding community access to reliable clean energy, and ensuring environmental sustainability through increasing both energy efficiency and the reliance of renewable energy sources. The government hopes to increase both local and foreign investment in renewable energy particularly solar energy which has proved to be highly efficient and cost effective in Palestine. The government aims to access and utilize its offshore gas and oil reserve in aim to solve the chronic energy crisis in Gaza and reduce expenditure on expensive energy imports.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Responsible consumption and production cross-cuts many different aspects of the NPA, including through government commitments to reducing and controlling pollution, expanding solid waste management and recycling, boosting the treatment of wastewater and its reuse, and enhancing the sustainable management of natural resources.



Unsustainable resource-use is prevalent across Palestine, resulting in a catalogue of social, environmental, and economic problems that will worsen as these patterns continue. In particular, unsustainable water usage is a serious threat to life in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. Israel's over-exploitation of the West Bank Mountain Aquifer, and corresponding inequitable distribution to Palestinians, has exacerbated soil degradation and desertification (See SDG 6 and 13). A vast amount of both water and electricity (See SDG7) is currently wasted passing through old and dilapidated infrastructure, which cannot be upgraded due to Area C permit restrictions. In the agricultural sector, the pressure on farmers to compete with cheap Israeli produce that is dumped in the Palestinian market has resulted in unsustainable farming practices including the overuse and/or improper use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers (See SDG 15).

In terms of waste, effective and sustainable waste management in Palestine requires upgrading due to the lack of safe and designated waste disposal sites. As a result, in 2016, Palestine generated 1.36 million tons of municipal solid waste, 106,891 tons of hazardous waste and 600,900 tons of

industrial waste; less than 0.5% of this was recycled, and 67% was openly dumped. Waste generation is estimated to increase by 4% per year, which would make the estimate of waste generation 1.429 million tons. Additionally, 80% of the 411,389 tons of waste produced by Israel's illegal settlements per year (excluding industrial waste) is disposed of at random West Bank dumpsites or in Palestinian landfills through the use of force and at gunpoint as it continuously occurs in the Minia landfill in the south of the West Bank.

Key challenges to sustainable consumption and production:

Palestinian development are the main drivers of unsustainable practices in Palestine. Despite the development of waste management strategies by the Palestinian government, all the land that could be used for developing waste disposal facilities in the West Bank is located in Area C and therefore at the mercy of Israel's obstructive permit system. For example, a project for a waste disposal facility near Ramallah, one of Palestine's main urban centres, has been consistently stalled by Israel since 2003.

Additionally, under the Oslo Accords, hazardous waste in Palestine is required to be transported to an Israeli landfill for its appropriate disposal as the Palestinian government is prevented from developing a proper disposal facility. However, while the proper disposal sites are non-existent in the West Bank, Israel has on numerous occasions transported their hazardous waste, and other waste, to Palestinian lands for its disposal. Currently there are at least 15 illegal Israeli waste treatment facilities in the West Bank, where most of the waste in these sites are produced by Israel. The issue of Israel's use of Palestinian lands as a dumping ground was also raised by the international community under the Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes, where the Basel Convention Secretariat confirmed that Israel has been transporting hazardous waste illegally to Palestinian lands. The restrictions on construction have also disabled the ability of the Palestinian government to undertake widespread recycling.

Government efforts:

The Palestinian government and its partners have set new milestones in the strive to sustainable consumption and create the legal and institutional framework to support the concept of sustainable consumption which was highlighted in the national sustainable consumption plan. The Palestinian government has implemented a number of pilot initiatives within this plan to promote sustainable agriculture and promote eco-tourism. In addition, the government introduced numerous interventions to target sustainable consumption, with the aim of altering the behaviour of Palestinian businesses and consumers, including: Value Added Tax (VAT) of 16.5% and income tax on supplied goods and services; a Polluter Pays Principle introduced into environmental law that forces companies that break environmental legislation to pay to rectify any damage; the introduction of 'green loans' which

help farmers and households to utilise sustainable technologies like rainwater harvesting and solar energy; the expansion of recycling initiatives; and gas collection from sanitary landfill.

In order to promote integrated solid waste management, the government has established and operated a number of landfills parallel to the closure of random dumps, as well as expanding the solid waste collection service to reach 100% by 2022.

In 2015, the State of Palestine ratified the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans boundary Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, where Palestine succeeded in holding Israel accountable for its violation of international environmental law. The case is an important first step for seeking further remedial action for environmental rights violations committed by Israel. Since the beginning of 2018, Palestine has been looking forward to joining the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention.

Looking forward:

The Palestinian government and its partners will continue to prioritize reducing and controlling pollution, expanding solid waste management and recycling, boosting the treatment of wastewater and its reuse, and enhancing the sustainable management of natural resources. These efforts will be part of the implementation of the national sustainable consumption plan, which focuses on promoting green economic development through reliance on sustainable agriculture, and tourism and green urban development.



SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Palestine signed and ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the 22nd April 2016^{xviii}. The government is committed to reducing Palestine's contribution to global emissions, although the occupation poses many challenges to achieving this (see SDG 7). The government is also determined to introduce measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, particularly in Palestine's threatened agricultural sector. Ensuring a sustainable environment and adapting to climate change is National Policy 28 of the NPA.



The State of Palestine is considered one of the least contributor nations to climate change, yet it views climate vulnerability with high importance for the negative repercussions of climate-related hazards on its citizens in the context of other socio-economic and political vulnerabilities (see SDG 1, 2, 6, 12), which affect communities' coping and adaptation mechanisms. The global failure to mitigate climate change and its related effects has already resulted in widespread climate vulnerability in Palestine, as the effects are becoming increasingly visible as each year passes with detrimental effects on farming and water resources.

The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forecasts significant warming in the eastern Mediterranean region (larger than global annual mean warming by 2.2-5.1°C), and a substantial decrease in annual rainfall (a drop of 10% by 2020 and 20% by 2050). Extreme weather conditions are also likely to accompany these changes, with an increase in the number of annual days of high temperature (over 30°C). These changes will have

serious impacts on life in Palestine, including creating challenging agricultural conditions that could affect productive capacity, as well as increasing the propensity for dangerous climate-driven events like forest fires, storms, and flooding. The effects of global climate change have already become visible in Palestine, including evidence of rapidly rising temperatures and reduced rainfall.

Reducing carbon emissions is therefore a priority for the Palestinian government. Currently, Palestine is responsible for 0.96 metric tons of CO₂ emissions per capita per year (TPC/Y), far below Arab neighbours: Jordan (3.44 TPC/Y), Egypt (2.62 TPC/Y) and Lebanon (4.7 TPC/Y), and less than a tenth of Israel's (9.27 TPC/Y)^{xxiv}.

Water scarcity has the most serious impact of climate change in Palestine. Climate change is expected to have major repercussions on water resources, which include increasing water shortages as a result of lower precipitation and higher evaporation; rising incidence of storm-water flooding;

reducing surface and ground water quality; a lessening supply of fresh water from Israel; increasing water salinity; and reducing rainfall being unable to recharge aquifers or cisterns.

Key challenges to mitigating climate change:

Major asymmetries between Israel and Palestine in the provision of fresh water are likely to be exacerbated by water supply scarcity (See SDG 6). This is particularly important due to Israeli occupation policies adding a considerable extra burden to Palestinian climate vulnerability, through exacerbating existing problems or the preventing effective action.

Due to water scarcity, agriculture is the Palestinian economic sector most likely to be adversely impacted by climate change and the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources. The shortage in water resources has compounded the negative effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian agricultural production in Palestine, especially since nearly 87% of agricultural lands are used for rain-fed agriculture. The agricultural sector will also be negatively affected by climate change through: recurrent droughts and increased desertification; higher demand for crop water; shortage of grazing land; decline in pasture production; and higher food prices. High seasonal variations and extreme weather conditions may also jeopardize heat- and cold-sensitive crops. The expected decline in agricultural production will compound the food security problem in Palestine (see SDG 2).

The exposure of the Palestinian population to these climate-related hazards should be understood within the larger political context of the Israeli occupation and its detrimental effects on Palestinian development and the ability to cope with and adapt to climate change. Conflict-related sources of climate vulnerability include: Israeli restrictions on access to land and water resources; Israeli restrictions on the development of water infrastructure including wastewater treatment plants and drilling wells; and, Israeli military aggression on Gaza Strip and the ensuing destruction of agricultural and drilling wells, water pipes, and wastewater plants.

This stems from the lack of sovereignty of the Palestinian government, which cannot implement clean energy projects to limit its carbon footprint with the presence of Israeli restrictions especially to the expansion of green energy infrastructure. The lack of data and climate change monitoring tools is also a key challenge for the Palestinian government to develop the relevant initiatives to mitigate the impact of climate change in Palestine. Due to the lack of access to Area C of the West Bank, the government cannot adequately monitor the impact of climate change on its environment. In the Gaza Strip, the siege has created challenges for importing the relevant climate change monitoring technology to

adequately assess the effects of climate change in Gaza, while early warning systems are heavily impaired by the lack of available technology and access to land and resources.

Government efforts:

Despite the State of Palestine's low emissions levels, there is no reason why these emissions cannot be reduced, contributing to global climate action. As part of Palestine's commitment to its climate change agreements and the Paris Agreement, the Palestinian government aims to implement a series of future interventions to reduce its carbon footprint and find alternative sources of green energy. As part of this commitment, Palestine has created its first plan to mitigate the effects of climate change, which is ratified by the ministerial council.

The government is currently spreading the use of PV solar panels in Area C, at a household level, owing to the restrictions on infrastructure development. In addition, the Government has made efforts in the field of solid waste management and recycling through the management of waste dumps, which contributes to the mitigation of emissions.

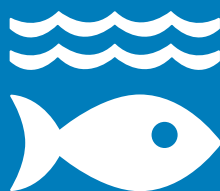
To mitigate the impact of future climate and natural hazards, on March 7th, 2017 the Palestinian Cabinet approved the formation of a National Team for Disaster Risk Management headed by the Prime Minister, a technical team that represents ministries, government agencies and private sector, civil society and academia at the national and local levels. In the coming year, the DRM centre will work on a risk assessment study and a DRM strategy for Palestine until 2022.

Looking forward:

In line with Palestine international commitments to climate change agreements, and by implementing the national policies to ensure the continuity of natural ecosystems and the mitigation of climate change. The Palestinian government will continue its efforts to reduce co2 emissions, expand its treatment of solid waste and recycling, promote the sustainable management of natural resources, continue to implement the Greening of Palestine program, increase reliance on renewable sources of energy and expand water harvesting projects.

SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Reducing pollution and enhancing wastewater management, treatment, and reuse – both critical to cleaning up Gaza’s coastline – are both key targets of National Policy 28 of the NPA, ensuring a sustainable environment and adapting climate change. The NPA makes it clear that finding a lasting and just political resolution to Gaza’s ongoing environmental, social, and political crisis require international decisive action to end Israel’s crippling siege.



Conserving and sustainably using sea and marine resources for sustainable development in the State of Palestine crosscuts with the Palestinian government efforts to enhance access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), access to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and to promote responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). As Palestine’s only Mediterranean coastline, achieving maritime sustainability is largely constrained by the Israeli siege and the limitations on access to the territorial waters.

Despite the fact that 99% of Palestinians in Gaza are connected to the sewage network, the severely interrupted and intermittent supply of electricity has seriously strained the capacity of wastewater treatment facilities resulting in untreated sewage back flowing onto Gaza’s streets. As a result, the sustainability of Gaza’s Coastal Aquifer, which supplies virtually all of Gaza’s water, has become seriously strained as untreated sewage seeps into the aquifer while years of over pumping has led to seawater contamination. Salinity levels of the aquifer range from 2 to 8 times saltier than global standards, while it is also reported that the aquifer has dangerous levels of nitrate (SDG 5). Additionally, during the peak of Gaza’s numerous electricity crisis as much as 100 million litres of raw sewage is discharged into

the Mediterranean daily as treatment facilities operate at limited capacities.

Other land-based pollution threatening the sustainability of sea resources result from recreational activities, industrial effluents and solid waste. Of particular concern are the highly concentrated levels of heavy metals, threatening water sources for consumption alongside the sustainability of fish stocks. WHO has highlighted that chemicals from sewage have reduced the reproductive success of fish, further threatening fish stocks, which are also vulnerable to overfishing. Traces of heavy metals such as copper and lead have also been discovered in fish caught off the coast of Gaza, while not yet at dangerous levels, the ongoing water and sanitation crisis poses a serious concern for the rise of these levels.

The ongoing erosion of sand dunes along the Gaza coastline is also of concern, as they act as a natural defence against flooding and large waves. This erosion also compromises Gaza’s marine and coastal ecosystem, already under serious duress. Over the last ten years, the Environmental Quality Agency found that in some areas the erosion has led to around 37 meters being lost to the sea. On the other hand, Israel completely controls the Dead Sea; Palestinians have



no access to the Dead Sea's resources; or to use it for recreation unless allowed by Israeli occupation. The Dead Sea has been witnessing an increasing and continuous decline in its water level, due to Israel's diversion of the Jordan River and its unsustainable use of its resources.

Key Challenges to conserving marine and coastal ecosystems:

The ongoing siege on Gaza has severely limited the capacity of the Palestinian government and partners to ensure the sustainable use of fish stocks and reduce pollution and contamination. Infrastructure collapse resulting from the targeted bombing of the Gaza Power Plant and other utilities has caused the failure of three sewage treatment plants, resulting in the raw sewage being dumped in the sea owing to the lack of alternative options. Continuing restrictions on the import of the construction materials needed to repair these critical waste management facilities means that this figure is only likely to increase in line with Gaza's population increase, unless urgent action is taken. In this regard, enabling Gaza's access to sustainable and clean energy sources is key to enabling the wastewater to be properly treated to ensure the continuity of marine ecosystems (See SDG 7).

As agreed in the Oslo Accords, Palestinian people in Gaza were granted fishing rights in the area up to 20 nautical miles from the coast. However, Gaza fishermen and women currently only have access to 3 miles from the coast, with some exceptions to reach between 6 to 9 miles, and this area has been arbitrarily reduced and expanded repeatedly over the past twenty years. Forcing Gaza fishermen and women into shallow waters has dangerous implications for Gaza's coastal ecosystem, depleting fish stocks by increasing the

exploitation of immature fish that have yet to reach breeding age. This has led to a dramatic depletion of fish stocks, with the total catch declining from around 4000 tons in 1999 to approximately 3305 tons in 2016. This results in a surge of food insecurity amongst Gaza's growing population.

Looking forward:

Reducing pollution and enhancing wastewater management, treatment and reuse – both critical to cleaning up Gaza's coastline – are both key targets of the NPA. To this end, the Palestinian government and its partners will continue to develop wastewater management in order to minimise and eventually reverse the pollution of the Gaza coastline. The government is implementing a series of assessments in order to pave the way for a functioning monitoring and evaluation system to the effects of climate change, pollution and unregulated construction across the Gaza coastline. However, any achievements in relation to Palestine's only stretch of sea will require fair and just political solutions. The government is utilizing its regional partnerships in order to conserve and protect the biodiversity along its coastline.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15 LIFE ON LAND



Land is at the heart of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and independence. The extension of national sovereignty over the entire land of Palestine and its natural resources is a top national priority. Despite the presence of the Israeli occupation, the Government is committed to improving the management and protection of natural resources, particularly land, water and energy, and promote their sustainable use; in addition to its efforts to preserve biodiversity.



Palestine is a signatory to various regional and international environmental agreements, and the government has enacted several laws that oblige people and the authorities to protect Palestine's environment and biodiversity. Despite its small size, the State of Palestine has several different climates and environments resulting in the rich biodiversity of fauna and

flora. The total number of living organisms in Palestine is estimated at around 51,000 species, making up 3% of global biodiversity. However, the biodiversity is dramatically decreasing with total of 24 species are endangered in Palestine due to expanding of human activity and illegal Israeli settlements, climate change and the construction of the Wall.

Palestine currently has a total forest area of 85.5 kmsq of which 82 kmsq is in the West Bank and 3.5 kmsq in the Gaza Strip. The areas covered by forests in Palestine has decreased from 350 kmsq in 1970 due to illegal Israeli settlement expansion and, illegal logging practices are common. The Palestinian government owns 85% of the total forest covered area of Palestine, while the other 15% is privately owned. The majority of forestland is used as cattle feeding areas with a total production of 2050 tons of cattle feed which constitute 720 tons of hay for cattle annually.

Additionally, Palestine faces many of the same challenges as neighbouring countries in halting and reversing desertification and soil erosion. Palestine's current area is estimated at 4,480km², which negatively affects food security, biodiversity and tourism.

Key challenges to conserving ecosystems on land:

A lack of sovereignty means Palestine is largely unable to effectively tackle environmental issues. Worse still, despite having the power and moral imperative to do so, in many cases the actions of Israel as an occupying power lend themselves more to environmental degradation and destruction than to conservation and sustainability. Sovereignty and control are the only means for Palestine to protect its natural ecosystem and biodiversity.

Israel's creation of 'nature reserves' in Palestine has long been an Israeli pretext for illegally expropriating Palestinian land. Beyond Israel's legal borders, there are 76 illegally claimed nature reserves, constituting 13% of the West Bank's area. Despite claiming their creation of nature reserves for reasons of environment and ecological protection, Israeli farmers are permitted to cultivate land in six nature reserves in the northern West Bank and Jordan Valley, with several more conversions from nature reserve to agricultural land also nearing implementation. In total, Israel has uprooted more than 1.5 million Palestinian olive trees, where alongside their value to the Palestinian environment and economy, the olive trees represent a symbol of Palestinian resilience, culture and heritage as a people of the land.

As a result, responsible and sustainable forest management is virtually impossible due to Israeli occupation. Between 1998 and 2004, land confiscation, illegal settlement construction and the Wall slashed Palestinian green lands, forests, and biodiversity from an already low 4.3% to less than 1.5%. Israel's illegal creation of Seam Zones (areas of Palestine trapped between the Wall and the Green Line of 1948 borders) has troubling ecological impacts. Seam Zones contain 49 forested and 40 protected areas, forming up to 55.5% of the forested area of the

West Bank. Alarmingly, the creation of this zone by Israel has been characterized by strip clearing, with a detrimental impact to biodiversity and soil and air quality. The Wall has devastating impacts on Palestinian environment due to its impact on the natural habitat of many animals and the fact that it acts as a barrier to the natural immigration of many local animals. In addition, the Wall separates Palestinian farmers from their farmland, which increases the threat of desertification on valuable farmland.

Additionally, land degradation is the product of complex and interlinking social, political and environmental factors, including the unsustainable management of resources through unrestricted animal grazing, agricultural expansion to protected areas and urban expansion over green areas as well as, climate change, weak legislative and social oversight. These problems have been exacerbated by Israel's occupation, characterized by the over-exploitation and inequitable distribution of Palestine's water resources. Israeli restrictions in Area C that deny access for Palestinian herders to more than 85% of their pre-1967 pastures have led to an unsustainable ratio of livestock per 100 sqm, resulting in overgrazing and environmental degradation. Likewise, the siege of Gaza has devastated the agricultural sector, contributing to the desertification of 75% of Gaza's farmland. While the exact economic cost of desertification in Palestine is unknown, in comparable countries it contributes to a loss of between 0.65% and 1.45% of GDP annually.

Government efforts:

Despite these Israeli impediments, the Palestinian government is undertaking a series of interventions to undo the deforestation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip through initiatives to plant trees replacing lost forest areas. Greening Palestine Initiative has planted 657,840 trees in 2016-2017. Implementing initiatives to protect and rehabilitate forests, rehabilitation and development of natural pastures, establishment of public parks in forests, enactment and implementation of national laws protecting forest areas, expansion of water harvesting initiatives are Palestinian governmental priorities.

An assessment of the state of desertification in Palestine and the identification of decertified areas is under way, in addition to the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the National Plan for the Protection of Natural Resources and Historic Monuments, which will impose protection on nature reserves, forests and areas of biodiversity. On the other hand, the Environmental Quality Authority is working on the development of management plans for a number of nature reserves, as well as evaluating and studying several others. The Government aims to join the International Convention on Biological Diversity.

Alongside initiatives to create parks and increase forested areas, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has also implemented the “Tree for Every Student” initiative to include sustainable forest management and environmental awareness as a part of the Palestinian school curriculum alongside the direct action of planting trees to promote reforestation. The Ministry of Environment has also issued a plan to grow 750 thousand saplings to add to the stock of the ministry’s nurseries. Taking the first steps to tackle land degradation, the ministry is also currently taking preparatory measures to assess the impacts of deforestation and the feasibility of different programs to reverse the impact of desertification on Palestinian farmland and habitat.

Looking forward:

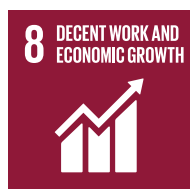
The Palestinian government aims to increase Palestine’s participation in the global effort to conserve natural ecosystems, through its commitment to the implementation of national and international agendas to conserve natural habitats and ecosystems, assure biological diversity, combat desertification, increasing natural conservation and sustainability of those conservations. In addition, Palestine looks to increase its partnerships with regional and international partners to aid it’s strive to achieve self-determination in order to have control over our resources to allow us to stop Israeli exploitation and conserve and rehabilitate those ecosystems.





PROSPERITY

The Palestinian economy continues to be directly dependent on and controlled by the Israeli economy. Political volatility remains the main source of uncertainty that hinders economic growth in Palestine alongside Israeli policies dictate Palestinian monetary and fiscal policies. The lack of access to Palestinian lands and resources, restrictions on economic activity, and restrictions on movement and trade, all feed into inability of Palestine to achieve further gains in economic growth. Despite this, the Palestinian government is committed to achieving economic growth through enhancing the decent job opportunities and equal access to economic opportunities in the Palestinian traditional and non-traditional productive sectors for all Palestinians to prosper and achieve their economic security and rights.





SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



The Sixth National Priority: Achieving economic independence includes several priority policies aimed at building the foundations of the Palestinian economy, focusing on rebuilding the Palestinian productive sectors, especially manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, and rebuilding the private sector in Gaza. The government is committed to provide decent work opportunities for all, and to provide an appropriate investment environment to increase foreign investment, particularly in construction, tourism, agriculture, information technology and energy sectors in order to strengthen the Palestinian industry and develop its competitiveness.



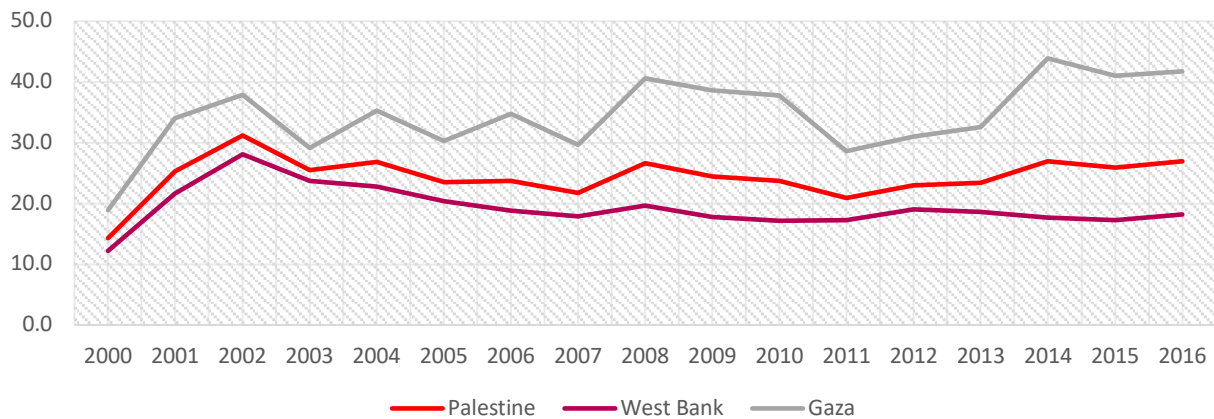
Decent work and economic growth are two key components to community resilience in Palestine. While Palestine has been experiencing an increase in GDP over the last several years, the amount of growth is insufficient to create the required jobs that are urgently needed in Palestine due to the population growth. In 2016, the nominal GDP growth was 4.7% while the real GDP growth per capita was 2.1%. The real GDP growth per employed person was 3.1%. Economic growth however is distributed unequally, with dividends mainly concentrated in Areas A and B of the West Bank, while Area C, East Jerusalem, and Gaza have struggled. While the West Bank's contribution to the total Palestinian GDP increased from 68.4% in 2006 to 75.2% in 2017, Gaza's share declined from 31.6% to 24.8%. As for East Jerusalem, the contribution to the Palestinian economy has also been on a downward trend, dropping from 15% in the 1980s to less than 7% in more recent times.

In 2017, the unemployment rate in Palestine reached 27.47% (43.9% in the Gaza Strip, and 17.9% in the West bank). Unemployment is most relevant to the age group 20-24, where 45.2% of youth aged 20-24 are unemployed. Alongside youth, women are also disproportionately affected by the economic climate and limited job opportunities, were 50.6% of women who finished more than 13 years of schooling remain unemployed (See SDG 5 and 10). Unemployment amongst disabled persons who take part in the workforce has increased to reach 37.3%. Of those aged 15 and over, labour force participation stood at 45.3%, or 1.4 million Palestinians, 70.9% of males participate in the official workforce while only 19% of females. Informal employment remains very high, with 59.0% of the total workforce work within unregulated employment, 89% of whom work in the agricultural sector, which makes up owing to the small-scale of the majority of Palestinian farms alongside the family-centred model.

Decent work remains scarce within the Palestinian workforce, where despite existing regulations to protect the rights of workers, these regulations remain highly ignored by employers. The gender wage gap is still high, child labour has increased to 3.4%, and 38% of all employees are paid below the national minimum wage. The government's inability to impose work regulations in Area C has caused an estimated 1,000 work related injuries annually of which 20-30 are fatal. Additionally, over 122,500 Palestinians work in Israel of whom

22,100 in illegal Israeli settlements of which 43,400 are unregistered workers without permits, mainly in construction and factory jobs. The Palestinian government cannot assure the safety and wellbeing of Palestinian employees in illegal Israel and Israeli settlements who face unjust and discriminatory treatment. The level of safety regulation is minimal which causes an estimated 600 work related injuries, mostly amongst unregistered workers.

Unemployment Rate



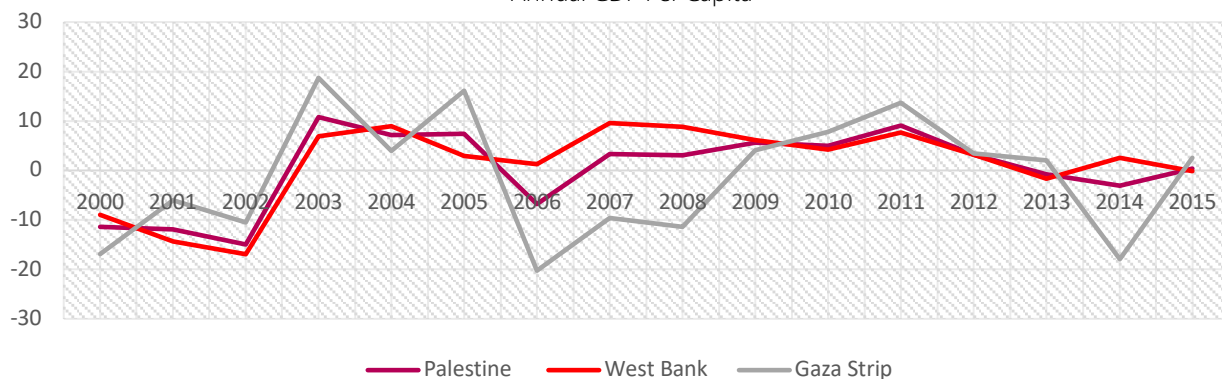
Key challenges to decent work and economic growth:

Israeli occupation results in increased political instability and conflict which has reduced the prospects of sufficient economic growth to meet the needs of the Palestinian people. Due to numerous agreements, the Palestinian economy has been subjected to the sustained dependence on the Israeli economy, limiting the ability of the Palestinian government to set monetary or fiscal policies to support its economy.

monetary policies, while Israel continues to systematically and deliberately violate many of its articles. The Protocol is the source of Palestinian dependency on Israel, whereby 58.2% of Palestinian imports are from Israel (US\$3.2 billion), and 83.2% of Palestinian exports are to Israel (\$770.8 million). While in the Paris Protocol, the State of Palestine was promised the ability to negotiate aspects of the trade policy through a joint economic committee, Israel has refused continuously to hold meetings of the economic committee for almost 10 years, resulting in a backlog of vital economic issues unresolved between Israel and Palestine. In reality, Israel holds veto power over trade policy in line with its economic interests, and

The Paris Protocol has had a debilitating impact on the Palestinian economy. Despite the intention to expire after 5 years, alongside the formation of a sovereign Palestinian state, 22 years later the protocol still dictates Palestinian fiscal and

Annual GDP Per Capita



controls all of Palestine’s external borders. This leaves the State of Palestine unable to form their own trade policies and partners without Israeli approval and unable to compete with cheaper Israeli subsidised goods. As a result, Palestinians are suffering from a rampant price inflation and resultant food insecurity due to the unequal and uncompetitive local market (See SDG 2).

Israel’s control over Palestinian natural resources in the West Bank, including prime agricultural land, water, stone quarries, oil and natural gas, and Dead Sea minerals, has resulted in the loss of an estimated potential \$3.4 billion annually that would increase economic growth in Area C, increase employment opportunities, reduce poverty and add to the financial capital of the State of Palestine. The additional more than 500 physical barriers and checkpoints imposed by the Israeli military occupation also hinders economic exchange, and in the case of Palestine’s capital, it has been completely cut off from the rest of the Palestinian market causing high levels of poverty and unemployment (See SDG 1). Additionally, the restrictions on movement have incurred additional costs on Palestinian goods, severely hindering competitiveness of local produce. The lack of autonomy and political distress has caused interest rates to soar in the West Bank, which creates a disabling environment for risk-taking to invest in economic opportunities.

In Gaza, the siege has severely eroded the Gazan economy to the extent that Gaza’s GDP in 1994 was about \$ 1,900.5 million, while in 2016 it reached \$ 3,395.6 million. The per capita GDP in 2016 was lower than in 1994. The World Bank estimates that Gaza’s GDP would be four times its current size had the siege never occurred. The siege has resulted in limited essential materials and resources to boost economic growth alongside the near destruction of Gaza’s productive capacity. Most enterprises are characterised by small-sized family owned businesses where the disabling environment has limited the ability for further growth.

Government efforts: The Palestinian government aims to reduce unemployment and increase its economy’s capacity to generate job opportunities through a series of incentivizing laws that aim at empowering the private sector to expand the Palestinian economy. Laws concerning investments, intellectual property, ownership laws, tax reforms especially in the field of renewable energy and industrial sectors has been put in place alongside reforming labor laws. The government deployed an employment fund, which generated # jobs in 2016 especially amongst youth graduates, of all genders; these efforts are in line with a vocational training program to support graduates get into the workforce. A micro-loan program was created to support persons with disabilities start their own ventures and join the productive sectors in the Palestinian economy, in addition,





the Office of Public Employees also reserves a quota of 5% to employ persons with disabilities in the civil service sector. In 2016, a social security law created the social security institute, which is expected to start operating mid-2018.

Looking forward:

The government aspires to achieve comprehensive economic independence to enable it to provide decent work for all. The government will implement initiatives to accelerate job creation through public-private partnerships and expand employment programs targeting university graduates in pilot projects through the deploying the Palestine Employment Fund. Other measures include supporting small and medium enterprises, supporting entrepreneurship, supporting and developing cooperatives and expanding their base, developing the digital economy and enhancing the role of IT in business development. The government will work to ensure a safe working environment by implementing health and safety standards in the workplace. Promoting Palestinian industry, rebuilding Palestinian productive sectors, particularly manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, and reconstruction of the private sector in Gaza are key government priorities. Efforts are being made to stimulate and increase foreign investment, especially in the construction, tourism, agriculture, information technology and energy sectors, as well as increasing international trade and exports. The government hopes to partner with the financial sector to support investment and growth in the private sector, with particular attention to bridging the development gap between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



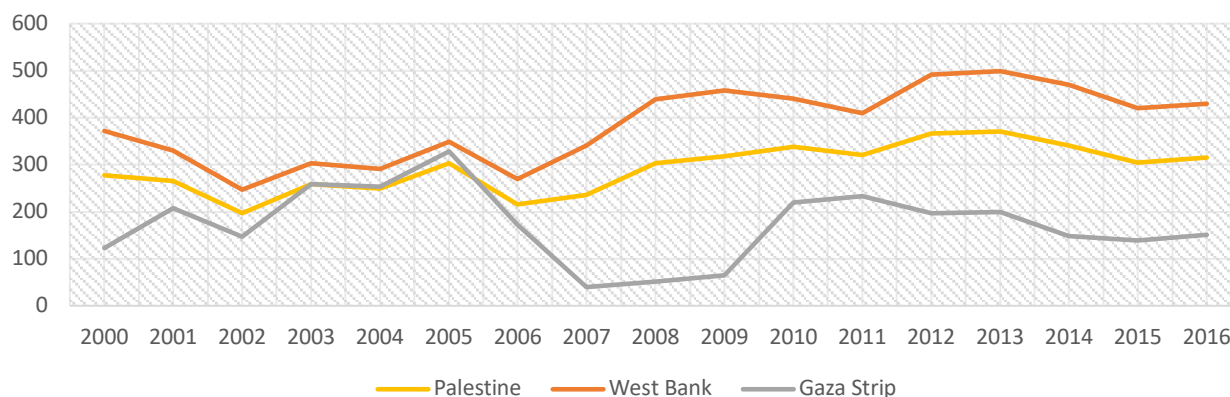
Planning and investing in strategic infrastructure projects is a core component of NPA, Priority 6. The government is seeking to strengthen and rebuild critical infrastructure namely transportation network, airports and ports, industrial parks, and water treatment facilities. The government is also seeking to create an enabling business environment to boost private sector involvement in infrastructure and (TVET) infrastructure investment.



Industrial production currently contributes 13.3% to Palestinian GDP, down from 15.5% in 1997. As a result, the total number of persons employed by the industrial sector has decreased from 16.4% in 1997 to 13.4% in 2017. Synonymously, transformative production's contribution to GDP is currently down from 12.5% in 1997 to 11.0% in 2016. However, in 2015, technological production contributed to 7.4% of the total added value of transformative production, which has increased to 10.2% in 2016. Research and development in Palestine remain minimal accounting for just 0.6% of GDP.

Palestinian production mainly consists of MSMEs which make up 92% of all industrial production firms, where 72% of enterprises in Palestine have less than 5 workers, while only 1.3% employ more than twenty. These numbers indicate the importance of small businesses informal employment; however, the disadvantage of an economy dominated by SMEs is lower productivity rates in comparison to larger enterprises that work with economies of scale.

Manufacturing added value per capita in USD \$



Key challenges to industry innovation and infrastructure:

The State of Palestine is prevented by the Israeli occupation from acquiring autonomy to build its infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. Within this unjust and illegal framework of countless restrictions on the implementation of infrastructure and manufacturing projects, the State of Palestine's infrastructure and manufacturing facilities are in despair.

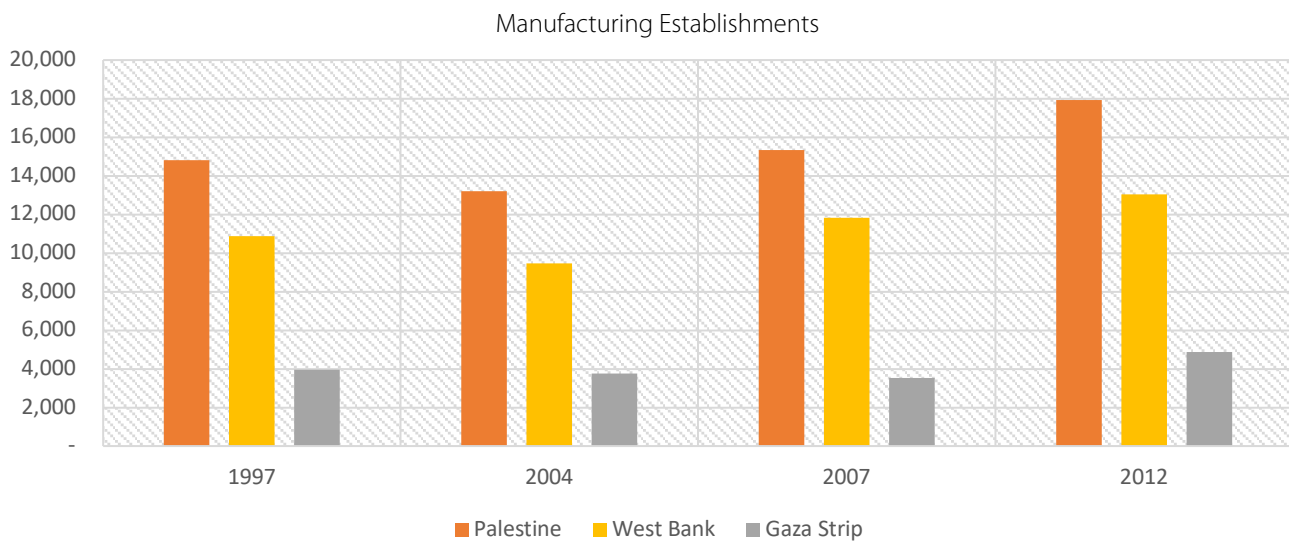
In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the development and construction of resilient infrastructure and industry is impeded by the Israeli occupation. Israel's prohibitive permit system in Area C systematically denies the development of Palestinian infrastructure by curtailing virtually all construction. Palestinian local councils are continuously denied their right to construct new roads especially in areas B and C. Up to 90% of villages have been denied any kind of building permission, including water, electricity, transport and housing infrastructure, and only 1.5% of permit applications were approved between 2010 and 2014. The Palestinian councils are also met with the challenge of the illegal Israeli settlement infrastructure that is built to systematically isolate Palestinian communities, thus complicating the ability of the Palestinian government and partners to overlap the illegally constructed Israeli settler only roads with vital Palestinian infrastructure. Where roads connecting Palestinian communities do exist, Palestinian infrastructure is continuously made dysfunctional using roadblocks that are set up by Israeli occupation forces.

These restrictions have also hindered industrial development in the West Bank as it is estimated that the extraction and sale of magnesium, potash, and bromine from the Dead Sea

area would have had a value added of US\$918 million per annum to the Palestinian economy if Israeli restrictions were removed. Severe constraints on access to mines and quarries in Area C have also hindered Palestine's ability to extract gravel and stones.

In Gaza, the development of vital infrastructure remains halted as the last round of Israeli hostilities has collapsed the infrastructure of Gaza and the siege has left little room for reconstruction with the denial of entry of building materials. More than half of furniture, garment, textile, and agribusinesses were closed by 2014 as a result of the siege, severe trade restrictions, shortage of electricity, and the physical damage inflicted by Israeli assaults. Consequently, the number of workers employed in the sector declined from 350,000 in 2005 to less than 15,000 in mid-2013. The 2014 Israeli assault has further weakened the industrial base, as over 20% of industrial enterprises and more than 4,000 commercial and trade enterprises were either destroyed or partially damaged.

IT infrastructure remains under the nearly complete control of Israel. Thus, Palestinian IT infrastructure is dependent on Israeli systems, resulting in Palestinians paying more than their Israeli counterparts do for a lower quality of IT services. Palestinians are still unable to access the 4G network, where access to the 3G network was only enabled this year and only in the West Bank.



Government efforts:

Since the adoption of the SDGs, the State of Palestine has undertaken 80 infrastructure projects with a total value of \$18.5m to build 66KM of roads. Currently the Palestinian authority is implementing a series of interventions to maintain the current road system in order to increase safety and reduce the negative impact on vehicles.

Additionally, the Palestinian government is currently creating an enabling environment for industrial production through creating special industrial complexes and changing laws to incentivize investment in infrastructure were between 2016 until mid-2017 a total of 24 infrastructure projects took place with a total value of 25 million dollars. A series of initiatives to support local products are being implemented as well as initiatives to support the competitiveness of local produce in the regional and international markets through initiating industry clustering by supporting 50 MSMEs to partake in clusters. The education sector in collaboration with the industrial sector is implementing changes to support vocational and artisanal training to help supply Palestinian industrial sector with the needed human resources and talent to aid its development.

The government is supporting the utilization of ITC solutions in the workplace through a series of laws and incentives that target cybercrime, electronic signature law, investment in ITC industry, and creation of a national database and a national team for ITC emergencies.

Looking forward:

The Palestinian government will continue its effort to build sustainable and reliable infrastructure and expand the Palestinian industrial sector. It aims to build the infrastructure for an independent state, which includes airports, ports, industrial complexes, and road, water and communication networks. The Palestinian government hopes to partner with global and regional investors, especially in ITC and renewable energy sectors. The Palestinian government will continue to support the industrial sector through increasing the capacity of industrial complexes to export to regional and international markets. The government's contributions to industrial production and expansion are part of its effort to boost the economy and provide much-needed jobs to reduce poverty and unemployment rates. The development of the ICT sector will be a priority for the government, as it will set up industrial zones for ICTs, develop and implement a national broadband plan, as well as a plan for innovation, and digitization.





PEACE

Achieving a just solution and peace between Israeli and Palestine and prosperity to all people in the region require an immediate end to the Israeli military occupation to the land, people and resources of the State of Palestine on the internationally mandated borders of 1967, including East Jerusalem. The complex political situation has created a convoluted system that leaves many Palestinians subject to several legal systems, as the Palestinian government has no control of a large vast of Palestinian territories, most notably Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. This includes the ability of the government to enhance the resilience and sustainability of Palestinian cities and communities, where growing population density and the restrictions to urban expansion pose additional challenges to peace. The first and foremost priority of the Palestinian government is to establish the conditions to foresee an independent Palestine co-existing peacefully alongside its neighbors, characterized by national unity and a citizen-centered and effective government, as highlighted in the NPA.





SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Building sustainable communities is a Palestinian national priority. The Palestinian government is committed to attaining its goal of providing communities with basic needs, safety, and to assure justice and rule of law. It also is committed to safeguarding its community from climate change and its consequences on agriculture, rural areas, and Palestinian cultural heritage.



Currently, 75% of Palestinians live in urbanized areas, 60% of Palestinians live in planned urban communities. Therefore, making cities safe, resilient and sustainable is important for the well-being of the Palestinian people. Since 1994, cities in Area A and B have flourished under direct Palestinian jurisdiction, this has led to increasing the migration from rural to urban areas, given that the majority of rural areas are in area C that is under Israeli control. Moreover, 41.5% (2,051,096) of the Palestinian population are internal refugees who live in refugee camps around Palestinian cities in 34 camps (UNRWA recognises and run 27 camps, 7 unrecognised).

Adequate, safe and affordable housing remains a key challenge, particularly in the areas where the government have difficulty accessing. In East Jerusalem, there is a chronic shortage of more than 10,000 housing units^{xxvi}, where the lack of housing has dramatically increased house prices by 192% between 2007 and 2012^{xxvii}. In Gaza, the most densely populated area in the world, the weak urban basic services and infrastructure have left many living in debilitated housing conditions, with a shortage of 70,000 housing units and a need for 13,000 extra houses per year to account for the rapidly growing population.

Palestinian green areas remain minimal due to urban expansion, desertification and logging, Palestine's total green protected areas, which have been approved, make only 7.6% of the total land area, while 38.3% of Palestine remains empty areas that are not built on. The Palestinian government has created a national spatial plan, which organises land and identifies sensitive areas that must be protected from urban expansion.

Cultural heritage is an integral part of the Palestinian identity, and of the resilience of Palestinian communities. Therefore, the Palestinian government has stressed the need to rehabilitate and protect historic and cultural sites in Palestine to assure the continuity of the Palestinian identity, especially with Israel's efforts to undermine and change the identity and rewrite a false history of many Palestinian cultural, religious and historic sites. Palestine is home to four world heritage sites as identified by the UNESCO, of which two sites are under threat due to the policies of the Israeli occupation authority. The Old City of Jerusalem in East Jerusalem is under the occupation and control of Israel; the Israeli occupation is undergoing a series of attempts to change its Arab and Islamic and Christian identity and history. The Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in the old city of Hebron is

currently appropriated by the Israeli occupation forces and Israeli settlers who violate Palestinian's religious rights by stopping the call for prayer on numerous occasions.

Public transport in Palestine mainly consists of private run vehicles and land transportation companies, where the transport sector contribution to GDP is just below 2%. The number of transportation vehicles for intercity transportation is 1.5/1000 citizens while the inner-city transportation vehicles are 2.2/1000 citizens. The public transportation sector suffers from the lack of governmental jurisdiction over Area C, where the government is unable to respond to transportation safety hazards in these areas and the numerous Israeli closures that continuously render the public transport system dysfunctional. Public transport between cities remain limited due to the lack of centralized transportation hubs within Palestinian cities due to the severe hindrance of the implementation of the national transportation plan due to political volatility.

Key challenges to sustainable cities and communities:

The Israeli occupation poses the biggest challenge to achieving sustainable cities and resilient communities. The forced displacement of Palestinians during the Israeli colonisation and military occupation of Palestinian land created a deficit inadequate housing and overcrowding in Palestinian urban centres. Expansion of Palestinian cities is also highly impacted by the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and resultant forcible displacement. The creation of the illegal Wall, and the road infrastructure that serves Israeli illegal settlements as well as limitations on construction in Area C obstructs the horizontal expansion of Palestinian cities, where the continuous annexation of land by the wall reduces the areas that Palestinian cities can expand into. Coupled with high population growth rates, this growth will further strain the already unsustainable communities in Palestine thus accelerating the inevitable crisis.

The imposition of Israeli rule has created an urban planning crisis for Palestinian Jerusalemites, which affects virtually every aspect of their lives: housing; the availability and distribution of public or open spaces; mobility and accessibility; segregation brought about by the construction of the Wall; and the ability to plan sufficient education and health infrastructure. Palestinian communities in Jerusalem have virtually no say in official planning considerations in line with their needs and aspirations, where the Palestinian government is unable to protect them from the discriminatory Israeli policies. The main cause of housing shortages in East Jerusalem is the restrictive permit system for Palestinians to seek approval for construction.

In Area C, Palestinian communities experience tougher restrictions imposed by the discriminatory planning regime. Although over 115 master plans for local development have been prepared since 2011, only three have been approved by the Israeli occupation named "Civil Administration". This has created a supply driven, a chronic housing crisis, due to the shortage of construction approvals causing a surge in prices and reducing access to adequate housing. The inability of Palestinians to meet their natural growth for housing and construction has resulted in many choosing to construct without a permit, which become under threat of demolition from the Israeli authorities, noting that there are over 12,500 demolition orders outstanding against Palestinian structures in Area C.

Additionally, Israel's settlements and their segregated road infrastructure seriously hinder Palestinian mobility in Area C and across the West Bank. Communities are forced to use detours that are between two and five times longer than the direct route to the nearest city, seriously affecting labour mobility and access to services. The physical separation of East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank also severely hinders movement of people and goods between the three Palestinian territories.

The sustainability of Gaza's cities is predicated on their reconstruction and connectivity with the rest of Palestine and the outside world. Since the widespread destruction of Israel's aerial bombardment in 2014, reconstruction efforts have been hampered by punitive Israeli restrictions and funding shortages. Gaza's destroyed or seriously dilapidated infrastructure is in desperate need of rebuilding, however Israel continues to hamper reconstruction efforts, particularly through restricting the entry of 'dual-use' items necessary for construction.

Government Efforts:

The Palestinian government and its partners continue to improve the living conditions of Palestinian citizens, particularly in vulnerable areas, through upgrading public facilities, especially the road system and improving access to services. The government and partner's ongoing reconstruction of Gaza as well as building accessible housing to the poor in the rest of Palestine. As part of its initiative to make communities more resilient the government has completed 23 urban plans in 2017 along its continuous assistance to local councils in creating and executing their urban plans. In its initiative to ensure the maintenance of Palestinian cultural sites the government and partners continue to support projects to restore and maintain cultural heritage sights in Palestinian cities, including the Old City of Jerusalem. In 2018, Palestine endorsed a comprehensive

national law for the protection of tangible heritage has been prepared in accordance with three UNESCO cultural convention ratified by Palestine. Palestine with the support of its partners has completed the rehabilitation and maintenance of 80 cultural heritage sites.

The Palestinian government has also undertaken steps to prepare Palestine for potential disasters both natural and non-natural. In particular, the desperate humanitarian situation in Gaza leaves it highly vulnerable to disasters, with even a moderate-scale emergency having the potential to become catastrophic due to already degraded infrastructure. As a result, the Palestinian government created a National Disaster Risk Management Committee, which aims to reduce the impact of natural and unnatural disasters. The Palestinian city of Nablus was chosen as part of the international strategy to reduce disaster impact through the intervention of making cities sustainable and resilient.

Looking forward: In order to achieve the inclusivity, safety and resilience of Palestinian communities, the Palestinian government took the required steps to provide the basic necessities to its communities, which include the connection with the water, sewage, and electricity network, improving the transportation services, and providing affordable housing. The National Policy Agenda gives priority to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage, increasing the green areas through greening Palestine initiative, and increasing the amount of usable public space. To reduce the environmental footprint of its citizens the government will continue to control the contamination of its land and increase solid waste treatment. The Palestinian government will continue to develop and implement its urban expansion plan where it aims to create sustainable and connected urban centres.





SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



The National Policy Agenda makes clear its commitment to justice, equality, non-discrimination and the democratic process in Palestine to assure the basic rights and freedoms of its citizens. The Palestinian government will continue its effort to reform its institutions to answer to its citizen's needs, which include the building of effective institutions, increasing transparency, social justice and rule of law to assure equal opportunities and access to development.



Given the special circumstances of the State of Palestine, peace is the top national priority. Violence levels in Palestine remain high, with the majority of the Palestinian population experiencing psychological and physical violence, particularly children. In Gaza in 2014, Israel killed 2,240 Palestinians, the highest number since the beginning of the siege on Gaza. The majority of victims of the 2014 Gaza assault were civilians, where 27% (612) were children. In 2015, 181 Palestinians were killed by Israeli occupation forces, while in 2016, 126 Palestinians were killed. The main source of violence in

Palestine is the existence of Israeli extrajudicial, illegal forces and settlers who operate with complete disregard to any form of legal Palestinian establishments or institutions and with impunity from the Israeli judiciary. The reoccurrence of extreme violence and crimes by Israeli occupation soldiers and extremist settlers causes the highest number of fatalities and injuries amongst Palestinians. In 2016, 150 cases of extrajudicial street executions by Israeli occupation forces were reported in Palestinian cities, further threatening the sustainability and safety of Palestinian cities (See SDG 11).

Number of Palestinians Killed by Israeli Occupation



Some areas of the Palestinian territory – particularly Area C, Seam Zones, Hebron H2, and those Israeli-annexed areas of East Jerusalem on the West Bank side of the Wall – can experience almost total lawlessness, or an inability for Palestinians to access any kind of formal justice. In many cases this is due to Israel’s negligence for enforcing the rule of law, while simultaneously refusing to allow access for Palestinian law enforcement officers to maintain law and order in these areas currently under Israeli occupation responsibility. Palestinian residents of the Hebron H2 settlement face some of the most challenging and restrictive conditions in Palestine, where approximately 40,000 Palestinians live alongside several hundred Israeli settlers and more than twice as many Israeli occupation soldiers. Discriminatory restrictions placed on Palestinians in H2 include: the closure of more than 500 businesses by military order and the further ceasing of business for more than a 1000 more due to restrictions on customers and supplies; the denial of basic services; and massive access restrictions including bans on Palestinian cars in the settlement and even bans on pedestrian access to many roads. There are serious gaps in the enforcement of the rule of law, including virtual impunity for settler violence, the physical harassment of schoolchildren, and even serious offences like murder.

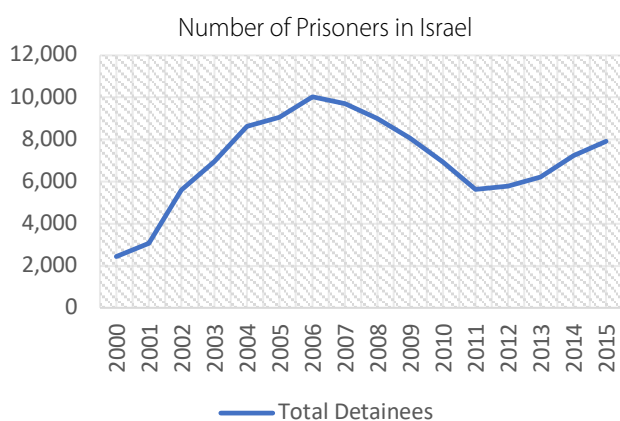
The existence of extrajudicial persons, protected by the Israeli occupation, who do not uphold the rule of law in Palestine, reduces the accessibility of Palestinian authorities to promote justice and assure judicial equality. Israel’s military court system, used to prosecute Palestinians living under military occupation in the West Bank, constitutes a flagrant breach of international legal standards and the right to a fair trial. This discriminatory system applies only to Palestinians living in the West Bank, and not to Israeli settlers, who are instead subject to Israeli civil law. The courts grant the Israeli Security Agency only minimal legal safeguards in their interrogation and prosecution of Palestinian detainees, far below Israeli civil and international legal standards. The time allowed for suspects to be held without charge, the length of time allowed before a trial takes place, and maximum sentencing guidelines are all far longer than in Israeli occupation civil courts, where an Israeli citizen would be tried for an identical crime. 99.74% of cases heard in Israeli occupation military courts resulted in a conviction in 2010; of 9542 cases heard, just 25 resulted in an acquittal.

Such gaps of formal justice and barriers to peace, in most cases, disproportionately affect Palestinian children. Israeli occupying forces carry out kidnapping operations on daily bases in the West Bank; those operations are responsible for the illegal incarceration of 750 Palestinian citizens without trial as of mid-2016. Israeli security forces arrest children in their homes at night, at gunpoint; question them without a family member or a lawyer present; and coerce them to sign confessions in Hebrew, which in most cases they do not understand. Palestinian detainees inside Israel, violates international law requiring that they be held within the occupied territory, and thus leads to restrictions on the ability of family members to visit them, due to Israel’s requirement that visiting family members clear security screenings and receive permits to enter Israel. Many aspects of Israel’s occupation have been ruled to be in violation of international law, including the annexation of East Jerusalem, the construction of the Separation Barrier, and Israel’s colonialist settlement expansion in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and in contravention to international human rights law, including extrajudicial killings and abusive detention.

Internally, the division between the West Bank and Gaza has led to the absence of a functioning Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and the democratic deficit in law-making poses significant obstacles to the improvement of Palestinian legal administration. Since the 2007 split, the PLC has been unable to propose, adopt or approve any legislation, which has led to the Palestinian President replacing the PLC and acting as the legislative body. In 2017 the reconciliation agreement was signed which will speed up the process of reunifying legislative bodies and for the PLC to get back to its function as the legislative body in the state of Palestine.

Human trafficking is not relevant in the context of Palestine, yet the Palestinian government has taken precautionary measures by creating a national team to counter potential human trafficking, the team is currently preparing the legal basis on which human trafficking laws are going to stand upon. Additionally, a juvenile law was passed, and a national team was created to ensure the training of judges and the implementation of the new law.

Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice is a national priority that the Palestinian government is committed to achieving. To this end, the Palestinian government created a committee that aims to unify the justice system in the north and south of the west bank, as well as creating a national strategy to provide legal representation to all citizens in court. The Palestinian government has been developing the infrastructure needed to increase the capacity of the judicial system, as well as using ITC systems in the judicial system that makes accessing the judicial system more efficient. As a result,



the overwhelming majority of households believe Palestinian justice institutions are legitimate; subsequently, 91.7% would call the police when in danger, 71% consider Palestinian courts as the only legitimate mechanism for resolving legal disputes; and 63.3% are confident they would receive prompt assistance from the police. These results are indicative of growing faith in Palestinian justice. These improvements were a result of the implementation of the 2005 Presidential Decree establishing the Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC), investigations, prosecutions, and adjudications of corruption cases have risen steadily within the specially mandated Corruption Crimes Court. The commission has produced a National Strategy on Anticorruption (2015-2018) aimed at limiting opportunities for corrupt practices through extensive dialogue with government, CSOs, the private sector, and Arab and international organizations.

Despite the government's efforts and interventions to make justice accessible to all of Palestine's citizens, a series of challenges obstruct the achievement and effectiveness of these efforts. The continuation of the Israeli occupation and the blockade on Gaza that fuels the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip contributes to a judicial asymmetry within Palestine, where currently two judicial systems exist. These two systems create a disparity in access to justice and obstruct the unified national judicial support system, which still only provides support for criminal cases and not personal rights cases. Detention on remand remains one of the main challenges to the justice system, where in 2016 a total of 745 cases of arbitrary detention were monitored by the Independent Commission for Human Rights, of whom 45% are awaiting trial. Additionally, 134 cases of violations of journalist rights were registered in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

in 2014, Palestine joined the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission launched the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2015-2018), which relies on strengthening the prevention mechanisms; expanding the legislative environment, and empowering regulatory institutions. The anti-corruption commission received 430 complaints during 2017, of which only 9% of cases were directed to the anti-corruption prosecution body. The capacity of the anti-corruption commission remains limited as 91% of cases have not been directed to the anti-corruption prosecution body. A perception survey shows that less than 25% of those surveyed believe in the independence of anti-corruption bodies, and 71% of those surveyed believed that cronyism and nepotism help them receive services and 55% believe that corruption increased in 2017. During 2016, Government accountability has also been strengthened through encouraging the participation in local elections in the West Bank; however, local elections in Gaza remain stalled.

To create efficient institutions, the government is periodically reviewing the structures of government institutions; which recently resulted in the General Personnel Council developing work cards, the terms of references and job descriptions for over 1000 public positions to enhance the checks and balances of the bureaucratic system and standardize responsibilities across all public institutions. The GPC also trained 43,000 public servants on general behavioural guidelines. Additionally, the GPC identified 30 highly sensitive positions that require rotation avoid abuse of power. Citizens have also been included to increase the efficiency of the bureaucratic process through the creation of an electronic complaint system, where citizens can file anonymous complaints about public servants and services. In 2016, the national complaint system received 10,246 complaints from citizens of which 9,777 were accepted; 91% of those complaints were followed up.

Looking forward:

The State of Palestine is committed to strengthening the rule of law and assuring the accessibility of justice to all in order to respond to its citizen's needs. Despite the impediment of the illegal Israeli occupation to the basic human rights of Palestinians, the State of Palestine will continue to build its judicial institutions to honour its commitment towards its citizens and the international agreements it abides by. The state of Palestine is committed to respecting pluralism, non-discrimination and every citizen's right of justice and equality. It will assure these rights through increasing transparency in public institutions and throughout governmental institutions, fighting corruption in all of its forms, assuring access to justice to all especially to youth and women. The government will continue to develop its judicial institutions through reviewing and developing laws and legislations and adapting them to the international agreements signed by Palestine, as well as creating implementation means of those laws.



PARTNERSHIPS

Revitalizing and building the bridges of international partnerships towards greater sustainable development in Palestine remains a high priority of the Palestinian government and people. The extraordinary commitment and support that Palestine has received from international partners over the last several decades have enabled the Palestinian people and government to sustain considerable gains to achieving sustainable development under such a constrictive political, economic and social environment. This also includes the support for Palestine's struggle for sovereignty and the numerous condemnations of illegal Israeli practices under international law. However, as sustainable development in Palestine cannot be achieved as long as the Israeli occupation persists, the State of Palestine and the Palestinian people hope to further consolidate and widen these global partnerships, particularly in the context of the ongoing stalled peace negotiations. These partnerships should transcend financial support to the Palestinian people towards supporting the building blocks of resilience through establishing a shared vision of ending the occupation alongside fostering trade between Palestine and its regional and global partners.





SDG 17: Partnerships: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



The National Policy Agenda stresses the need for international collaboration and partnership to end the occupation and achieve sustainable development in Palestine.



Palestine's struggle for ending the Israeli occupation, achieving independence, statehood and the attainment for its people's inalienable right of self-determination is supported by 138 member and non-member states who recognise the State of Palestine in the United Nations. Currently, the State of Palestine is a non-member observer state at the United Nations awaiting full membership. Since 2011, the State of Palestine has signed 88 international treaties and agreements in areas of environmental conservation and human rights; in the same year, the State of Palestine join UNESCO as the 195th members. In 2015, Palestine joined the International Criminal Court as the 123 member.

Regionally, the State of Palestine takes part in sustainable development forums and conventions such as the Arab Committee for Sustainable Development led by the Arab League, the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development led by the ESCWA, and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Internationally, the partnership between the State of Palestine and the European Union remains one of the most important strategic partnerships due to the continued support of the

European Union to the Palestinian people and government in strengthening the Palestinian institutions and in attaining sustainable development. Palestine holds bilateral relationships with a number of friendly nations that support its strive to achieve sustainable development and statehood.

The Palestinian government continue to strengthen its partnership with the United Nations development assistance framework in Palestine to ensure that international developmental support aligns with the national priorities. The Palestinian government also hold bilateral relationships with UN agencies that work within Palestine.

Internally, the Palestinian civil society and private sector are strategic partners to the Palestinian government in achieving sustainable development. The Palestinian government sees collaboration with Palestinian civil society and private sector as a means of achieving sustainable development; therefore, it has adopted an inclusive policy in the creation of national and sectorial policy agendas particularly the NPA 2017-2022. The government aims to develop and strengthen its partnerships with the civil society and the private sector in the execution

of its agenda, especially in areas of education, healthcare and social protection. The healthcare partnership in Palestine is a model that includes the government, civil society, and private sector where partners share roles and responsibilities to increase the quality and availability of services to citizens. Financial instability due to Israeli occupation's illegally cutting of the government's VAT revenues and the reduction of international support hinders the government's ability to pay its private sector's partners, which undermines the partnership model in the healthcare sector. The government remains committed to strengthening internal partnerships, which the NPA makes clear the importance of such partnership in providing services and achieving sustainable development.

The coherent nature of the sustainable development goals 2030, calls for strong partnerships amongst national bodies for the realisation of national priorities. Starting from the consensus amongst Palestinian development partners that the only way to achieve meaningful development and face the developmental challenges is through strong partnerships; transparent dialog amongst partners and the identification of the roles and responsibilities of each partner becomes key to ensure the most efficient allocation of available resources for a better standard of living in Palestine.

Palestine is heavily reliant on international aid and financial support; this reliance is a direct result of Israeli control on the national resources of the Palestinian people. Israeli control of Palestinian natural resources that it utilizes for its own development has had catastrophic consequences on development in Palestine and has led to increasing the reliance on international aid by the Palestinian government. Palestine, with the help of the international community, aims to reclaim its resources from Israeli control in order to reduce reliance on international aid and utilize its own national resources for its developmental plans. Until Palestine reclaims its resources from Israeli occupation the Palestinian government will continue to rely on international aid to sustain its community and ensure basic services to its citizens.

Since 1995, the international community has been providing humanitarian support to Palestine. The humanitarian support to Palestine has been an essential part of alleviating the detrimental effects of Israeli occupation on all aspects of Palestinian life. Yet, humanitarian support has not transcended to political support that solves the root cause of the humanitarian crisis and ongoing injustice due to the prolonged Israeli occupation of Palestine. The political support required to end the Israeli occupation is an essential part of sustaining the development created through the developmental and humanitarian funding Palestine is receiving. International political support to Palestine, and pressuring Israel to withdraw from the areas it has occupied

in 1967 will allow for sustainable development in Palestine and the reduction of reliance on international humanitarian aid through utilizing Palestinian national resources for development.

A sharp fall in the international developmental support to the State of Palestine of the past six years has alarmed the Palestinian government especially with the intensifying humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the never-ending political and economic crisis in the rest of Palestine due to the policies of the Israeli occupation. The reduction of funding to the government and to developmental programs negatively affects the government and its partner's ability to provide essential services to the Palestinian people. In addition, the United States decision to reduce the amount of funding to the UNRWA has had grave consequences on the livelihood of Palestinian refugees. These steps have lead the Palestinian government to ensure that the currently available funding aligns with its national priorities through creating a national framework for the utilization of international aid. This framework aims to create a forum for discussion of development priorities amongst donors, civil society and private sector in order to utilize funds more efficiently in a way that helps the government achieve its NPA 2017-2022.

Palestine remains unable to freely trade and join the international market due to Israeli restrictions on both imports and exports, and the Israeli control of Palestinian land, sea and air transportation. This has resulted in a trend of increasing the reliance on Israeli for Palestinian trade, which given the developmental, economic and political asymmetry has favoured Israel. In 2016, Palestine imported USD \$5.36 billion worth of Israeli goods while only exporting USD \$0.93 billion. Palestine aims to increase the volume of trade with other countries through bilateral trade agreements with regional and international partners, it has signed a free trade agreement with the EU and other countries. Palestine hopes to join the World Trade Organisation and be able to trade freely without the restrictions of the Israeli occupation.

CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS:

The continuous colonization and occupation of the state of Palestine and the deliberate policies of oppression taken by the Israeli occupation remain the main obstacle to achieving the SDGs in Palestine. The lack of self-determination in an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, control over national resources and land, water and air borders obstruct development in all of its forms in Palestine. Therefore, ending the occupation and colonization of Palestine is a key condition for the State of Palestine to achieve development and the sustainable development goals in order to leave no one behind.



Gaza Blockade:

The illegal Israeli siege and blockade on the Gaza Strip that has remained for over 11 years, where two million Palestinian citizens live in a state of humanitarian crisis in an area designated unfit for human inhabitancy due to the environmental, economic and social repercussions of the Israeli siege which can be summarized by:

- Very high unemployment and lack of opportunity especially for the youth,
- Striking poverty that has led to the dependence on food aid due to restrictions on farming and trade,
- Lack of urban development and maintenance due to restricting the entry of building materials,
- Up to 20 hours of electricity shortages due to the restrictions on energy imports,
- No access to clean drinking water, which is resulting in the slow poisoning of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip.

Area C:

An area that constitutes two-thirds of the West Bank and is home to 1 million Palestinians across 612 communities. The Israeli occupation prevents the Palestinians from accessing and investing in this area and even from carrying out any activities therein, including the construction of schools, clinics and basic infrastructure without prior permits, which are not easy to obtain. Not only that, but the occupation forces continue to tighten their grip over that area with an aim to force out Palestinians and replace them with Israeli settlers.

East Jerusalem:

The eternal capital of the State of Palestine has been isolated from its natural prolongation with the rest of the occupied West Bank in an attempt to destroy the social fabric of the Palestinian people. Jerusalem is exposed to a series of accelerated and systematic measures at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces to obliterate and Judaize the Arab Palestinian identity. President Donald Trump's administration lends support to these measures, which has culminated in its recent decision to illegally recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish people. This decision is null and void, has no legal effect, and contradicts the international law. We, along with the international community, reject it as it poses a threat to international peace and security.

6 million Palestinian refugees:

Palestinians forcefully removed from their homeland still live in other areas around the world. Two million of them live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where UNRWA provides them with basic services until a just solution is reached in line with the UN resolutions, particularly the Palestinians' right to return pursuant to Resolution 194 of 1948. UNRWA is facing a severe

financial crisis that jeopardises its existence and undermines its ability to provide basic and sustainable services to refugees. This threatens a large number of refugees to slide into poverty, unemployment, marginalization and social exclusion, depriving a significant segment of Palestinians from sustainable development.

Population Growth:

Increasing pressure on the basic services due to the high natural population growth of about 2.8 percent in 2017. By 2030, around 1,650 new schools will need to be built to meet the increased demand for school seats. We also need to build 36 new hospitals and add 5,100 beds. Moreover, we need to create 1 million new jobs to accommodate the expected increase in the working-age population. The increase in the working-age population is a development opportunity. However, this opportunity will remain hard to catch as long as the Israeli occupation continues to hinder us from securing what is needed to unleash youth's potentials and promote their participation in development. This is the same reason that drives the Palestinian youth to run to the boats of death in search of hope.

Lack of resources to finance the development agenda:

The national budget is limited due to the inability of the Palestinian people to access and control their natural resources. The revenues of these resources have been estimated by the World Bank at \$3.4 billion a year, which makes up 25% of GDP. Being the key pillars of the desired sustainable development in Palestine, these resources would enable us to rely on ourselves and dispense with the foreign aid provided to our people. Another factor is the sharp decline in the volume of foreign aid to Palestine in past years. We therefore urge the donor countries to fulfill their obligations on the basis of the relevant and agreed international resolutions.

The need to strengthen the national institutional capacities in following up and implementing a sustainable development plan based on human rights and partnership with all stakeholders. We look forward to benefiting from the expertise and experiences of countries in this field.

Lack of available data to measure progress in the implementation of many SDGs. Despite efforts made in this context, represented in the development of national indicators that are complementary to the international ones, the availability of classified data for sustainable development indicators (SDIs), which enable us to formulate effective policies remains one of the challenges facing the national statistical system in the next stage. Data on only 109 out of 244 SDG indicators are available, which has affected our ability to give an account of the reality of SDIs in Palestine.

CONCLUSION AND LOOKING FORWARD:



Palestine faces a series of unique challenges that hinder its ability to achieve sustainable development. Undeterred by these challenges, particularly the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Palestinian government, along with its partners from all sectors of the Palestinian society and with the support of international institutions has achieved tangible results in areas with limited constraints by Israel.

In education, mandatory schooling for all children has led to bridging of the gender education gap, the increased coverage of primary medical facilities has led to an increase in life expectancy, record high vaccination rates and increased care for pregnant women as well as an increase of births under medical care. Women participation in development has increased, where we have seen an increase in women participation in the workplace, as well as their participation in local councils, and in the public sector.

Despite the government and its partner's efforts, Israeli restrictions led to hindering the government and its partner's ability to address goals that it directly affects its achievement, which mainly consist of economic prosperity and environmental protection. In poverty reduction, Palestine has taken steps towards a coherent social protection plan through a unified gate for poverty alleviation, as well as a series of economic empowerment programs, which promotes sustainable solutions to poverty and self-reliance that target the poor as well as unemployed citizens especially the youth. To support the economy and assure inclusivity of all citizens in economic development the Palestinian government continue to expand industrial complexes and the infrastructure needed for their success. The government is promoting investment through creating an incentivising environment for the private sector to invest and lead job creation. A national employment fund was deployed to help innovative start-ups and create job opportunities especially for the youth.

Water and sanitation has seen increased infrastructure development, with the number of citizens connected to the water and sewage network is increasing, yet at the same time, the availability of water is decreasing due to Israeli control of Palestinian water resources or contamination, which creates a water crisis in the Gaza Strip.

In environmental conservation, Palestine has created a national framework for responsible consumption through the adoption of the responsible production and consumption strategy. In its effort to reduce the environmental footprint of its citizens the State of Palestine has expanded solid waste treatment, and recycling infrastructure, as well as sewage treatment. Sustainable water and solar energy collection was expanded along with a campaign to raise awareness on water and energy conservation to reduce leakages and resource misuse. Greening Palestine program continue to provide trees to citizens to and local councils in order to increase green areas in Palestine. In ensuring the sustainability of cities and communities and government and its partners ensure the coverage of basic services while continuing to expand the road network and necessary infrastructure for these communities' survival. An Inclusive approach was taken in the developmental planning of cities and urban communities, where connectivity between urban and rural areas was strengthened to ensure higher connectivity and economic development.

Despite the obstacles posed by the Israeli occupation, which hinder the implementation of many planned initiatives and the achievement of further achievements, the government and its partners are determined to make every effort to build on the




achievements and progress in achieving the objectives of the sustainable development goals that are of national priority. The Palestinian government will continue to build and strengthen its partnerships in order to reach a cohesive strategy where the civil society, private sector and local communities assist each other in providing quality services to citizens and support their resilience in the face of Israeli policies that aim to control the land and people. The government will also enhance its partnerships with the international community, where we aim to move past a developmental partnership to a political partnership where the international community can assist the Palestinian people in attaining their right of self-determination and statehood on the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as their capital. The Palestinian government renews its commitment to its responsibilities towards the international agreements it has signed, especially agreements related to human rights, where it will ensure the human rights of its citizens in a democratic society where justice and equality amongst all citizens prevail.

Human capital is an important resource for development in Palestine, especially with the young demographic in which one-third of the population is young with forecasts of an increase in the youth demographic. The Government is determined to take the necessary measures to transform the demographic challenge into a demographic opportunity that will allow further developmental achievements in Palestine. Therefore, investment in youth is a priority for the government to enable them to have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to participate actively and positively in building the state of Palestine. Therefore, the government will invest to improve the basic services provided to citizens, especially education and health and meet the increasing demand for these Services coupled with projected population increase for 2030. It will also support and develop the Palestinian Employment Fund and expand its partnerships with the private sector to provide employment opportunities with a focus on supporting entrepreneurial projects, especially for young people, in an effort to meet the growing demand for jobs by 2030.



Progress in the Implementation of SDGs: Means of Follow-up and Implementation

1. Focus on following up the implementation of national sustainable development priorities in order to accelerate progress on the implementation of these SDGs, while strengthening coordination and joint work among stakeholders from different sectors to ensure efficiency of work, and thus get the best results at the lowest costs;
2. Promote community participation in the follow-up and implementation of SDGs through the development and application of a national strategy to strengthen partnership with all parties and groups concerned with SDGs;
3. Develop and implement a national mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of SDGs, and conduct an annual review, in coordination and cooperation with all stakeholders, to be presented to the National Forum on Sustainable Development;
4. Cooperate and coordinate with all stakeholders to provide data on SDIs;
5. Mobilize and develop partnerships, at the regional and international levels, on national sustainable development priorities;
6. Raise institutional and community awareness of SDGs at the national and local levels; and
7. Promote the participation of the media in following up the implementation of SDGs.

Sustainable Development Goals	National Policies	Policy Interventions
	Escaping Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen economic and social empowerment programs benefiting vulnerable groups and the poor. Ensure that economic and social policies address the needs of vulnerable groups and the poor. Promote social integration by establishing job creation programs for excluded groups (disabled, youth, women, ex-prisoners).
	Strengthening Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the effectiveness and coherence of our social protection system. Ensure effective implementation of the social security law and regulations. Promote corporate social responsibility and tripartite social dialogue.
	Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure food security.
	Revitalizing Agriculture and Strengthening Our Rural Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase agricultural plant and livestock production and develop value chains. Protect and support farmers, particularly in areas under threat.
	Better Health Care Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform the public health insurance system. Ensure the fiscally sustainability of the health care system. Improve the quality of health care services (infrastructure, equipment, drugs, IT, training of health care workers, standards) Increase equitable access to health care services.
	Improving Citizens' Health and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen preventive health care, raise awareness and promote healthy lifestyles. Introduce a family health care approach. Improve and implement national policies on chronic disease management.
	Improving Early Childhood and Pre-School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop early childhood education programs. Expand and improve pre-school education.
	Improving Student Enrolment and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain high enrolment and improve retention of boys and girls in basic education. Improve enrolment and balance of boys and girls in all streams of secondary education. Improve enrolment in continuing education and literacy programs. Support and protect Palestinian education in East Jerusalem, Area C and Gaza.
	Improving Primary and Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform and modernize primary and secondary school curricula. Develop e-learning programmes. Ensure equitable access to education, particularly in marginalized areas and for vulnerable groups. Provide continuing training programmes for teachers and support staff. Upgrade educational facilities to ensure a safe, healthy learning environment. Expand extracurricular activities.

Sustainable Development Goals	National Policies	Policy Interventions
	From Education to Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align TVET and higher education with development and labor market needs, with equitable access to these opportunities. Upgrade and expand TVET infrastructure and facilities. Strengthen Palestine's scientific research capacity. Empower and equip Palestine's youth to participate meaningfully in public life and state building.
	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. Remove barriers that prevent the full participation of women in community and economic development and public life. Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in policy-making, planning and budgeting.
	Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand community access to clean water and sanitation. Expand community access to reliable energy. Improve public transportation and road safety. Support affordable, safe housing.
	Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand community access to clean water and sanitation. Expand community access to reliable energy.
	<p>Creating Job Opportunities</p> <p>Building Palestine's Future Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite job creation through public-private Partnerships. Develop job creation programs for graduates, ensuring equal opportunities for women. Expand the Palestinian Employment Fund. Ensure a safe work environment through application of health and occupational safety standards. Ensure that our youth are provided with opportunities for a successful future. Support business start-ups and MSMEs. Rebuild Palestine's productive sectors, focusing on manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and restoring Gaza's industrial base. Attract domestic and foreign direct investment. Focus on construction, tourism, agriculture, energy and ICT sectors. Expand international trade and exports. Plan and invest in strategic infrastructure (water, electricity, transportation and telecom networks, airports, seaport and industrial parks).

Sustainable Development Goals	National Policies	Policy Interventions
 <p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	Improving Palestine's Business Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and expand co-operatives. • Cut red tape for business through smart regulation. • Support and promote the digital economy. • Enhance ICT's role as a business enabler. • Strengthen Palestine's cyber security and ensure the ICT sector's freedom from external threats and domination.
	Promoting Palestinian Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and protect national products, increase competitiveness and expand import substitution. • Increase Palestinian products' share of the local market. • Rebuild productive sectors in the southern governorates.
 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	Our Youth; Our Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a particular focus on assisting disadvantaged youth.
	Strengthening Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the effectiveness and coherence of our social protection system. • Ensure effective implementation of the social security law and regulations. • Promote corporate social responsibility and tripartite social dialogue.
	Improving Services to Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a government-wide service improvement strategy, with particular focus on "Area C" and East Jerusalem, in cooperation with our delivery partners.
	Responsive Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand local economic development. • Bridge the West Bank-Gaza development gap.
 <p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support affordable, safe housing. • Connect communities with clean water, sanitation and energy sources. • Improve public transportation and road safety. • Strengthen capacity for disaster response and crisis management.
	Preserving Our National Identity and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement initiatives to preserve and develop Palestine's cultural heritage. • Develop traditional handicrafts. • Promote Palestine as a tourist destination.
 <p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	Ensuring a Sustainable Environment and Adapting to Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, protect and promote sustainable use and conservation of natural resources (land, water and energy). • Expand wastewater management, treatment and reuse.
 <p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>	Ensuring a Sustainable Environment and Adapting to Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce and effectively control pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. • Strengthen capacity for disaster response and crisis management.

Sustainable Development Goals	National Policies	Policy Interventions
 <p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>	<p>Ensuring a Sustainable Environment and Adapting to Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, protect and promote sustainable use and conservation of natural resources (land, water and energy). • Protect and support farmers, particularly in areas under threat.
 <p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p>Ensuring a Sustainable Environment and Adapting to Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Palestine green (conserve biodiversity, establish nature preserves and expand green spaces).
 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>Ensuring Community and National Security, Public Safety and Rule of Law</p> <p>Strengthening Accountability and Transparency</p> <p>Upholding Democratic Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement measures to enhance community security and public safety. • Combat corruption in all its forms. • Implement the code of conduct for civil servants. • Strengthen transparency in government, including the approval and implementation of access to information legislation. • Reform and restructure Palestine's public institutions to increase efficiency and improve service quality. • Safeguard citizens' rights and promote respect for pluralism, equality and freedom from discrimination. • Consolidate and modernize Palestine's body of law, ensuring consistency with international obligations.
 <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	<p>Effective, Efficient Public Financial Management</p> <p>Improving Palestine's Business Environment</p> <p>Promoting Palestinian Industry</p> <p>Responsive Local Government</p> <p>Broadening Palestine's International Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management, with a particular focus on strengthening macroeconomic/fiscal policy, public debt management and procurement. • Mobilize revenue by expanding the tax base; enhancing tax collection, restoring foreign aid levels and rationalizing expenditures. • Attract domestic and foreign direct investment, focusing on construction, tourism, agriculture, energy and ICT sectors. • Expand international trade and exports. • Support and protect national products, increase competitiveness and expand import substitution. • Enhance ICT's role as a business enabler. • Strengthen Palestine's cyber security and ensure the ICT sector's freedom from external threats and domination. • Strengthen service delivery through partnerships with the private sector and civil society. • Fulfil obligations arising from Palestine's accession to international treaties and membership in international organizations.

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