Press Release by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Environment Quality Authority on World Environment Day

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated annually on the 5 June. WED aims to inspire more world citizens to take action to halt the growing strain on planet Earth's natural systems. The 2016 theme is the fight against the illegal trade in wildlife, which erodes precious biodiversity and threatens the survival of elephants, rhinos and tigers as well as many other species. It also undermines our economies, communities and security. This year's slogan "Go Wild for Life" encourages people to spread the word about wildlife crime and the damage it does, and to challenge all those in the around to do what they can to prevent it.

Biodiversity in Palestine

Despite the small area of the State of Palestine, it is rich in natural diversification of its vegetation caused by variations in geography, climate and rainfall distribution, differentiated soils and geology. In addition, there are obvious contrasts in natural topography; you find desert, mountains of more than 1000 meters above sea level, to the plains and coastal regions at sea level and areas 394 meters below sea level. This makes Palestine is a natural repository full of immense wealth, including many wild plants and all kinds of organisms**.**

There are about 51,000 living species (flora and fauna) in historical Palestine, constituting approximately 3% of global biodiversity.
In the West Bank and Gaza Strip there are an estimated 30,904 animal species, consisting of an estimated 30,000 invertebrates, 373 birds, 297 fish, 92 mammals, 82 reptiles and 5 amphibians. Recent studies on birds in Palestine indicated that there are 373 species, which represent 23 Orders, 69 families, 21 Subfamilies, and 172 genera. The country also hosts 2,850 species of plants from 138 families.

Wildlife trade

In an attempt to combating the continuous abuse on wildlife species through illegal trade and smuggling, national efforts intensified to address the conservation challenges of biodiversity resources of fauna and flora. Monitoring of the local markets by EQA staff and the cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture for the trading in wildlife species round the year helped lowering the number of such animals on the local market.

The most endangered species by this activity include rare bird species, mainly raptors, and mammals like Gazelles, hystrix, and some species of Plants used traditionally for medical purposes.

Six reptiles species are included in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) indices in Palestine, and more than 20 birds species also listed at the indices of CITES, in addition to more than 13 mammals species also, listed on the CITES indices. The plants species listed on CITES appendices include only one plant species which is the *Cyclamen persicum*.

Auxiliary Environmental Profile

Water

The Household Environmental Survey 2015 results showed that 93% of households in Palestine live in housing units connected to the public water network, whereas the household sector in Palestine consumed about 16.3 million cubic meters of water per month (MCM/month) during 2015, distributed as follows: 10.4 MCM/month in the West Bank and 5.9 MCM/month in Gaza Strip. The monthly average household consumption of water in Palestine was 18.7 cubic meters (M^3): 18.3 M^3 in the West Bank and 19.7 M^3 in Gaza Strip.

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Rainfall

The amount of rainfall in 2015 was higher than the mean average in most of the stations, scoring a total amount of 667 mm in Tulkarem Station, and 201 mm in Jericho station. The mean average rainfall in Tulkarem station is 602 mm and 166 mm in Jericho, and the distribution of rainfall level was concentrated in most of the governorates in January and February during the year 2015.

Wastewater

During 2015, data indicated that 54% of households in Palestine used wastewater networks to dispose of their wastewater, 32% of households used porous cesspits, 13% used tight cesspits and 1% used other methods to dispose wastewater such as disposed in valleys.

Solid waste

In 2015, local authorities collected solid waste from 79% of households in Palestine (78% in the West Bank and 81% in Gaza Strip) and UNRWA collected solid waste from 9% of households, and 6% are served by other doers, where as 6% of households did not have solid waste collection service.

The average household daily waste generation in Palestine in 2015 was estimated at 2.9 kg: around 3.2 kg in the West Bank and 2.4 kg in Gaza Strip. The overall quantity of household solid waste generation on a daily basis was about 2,551.0 tons in 2015.