

Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development

Millennium Development Goals

Progress Report

August 2010





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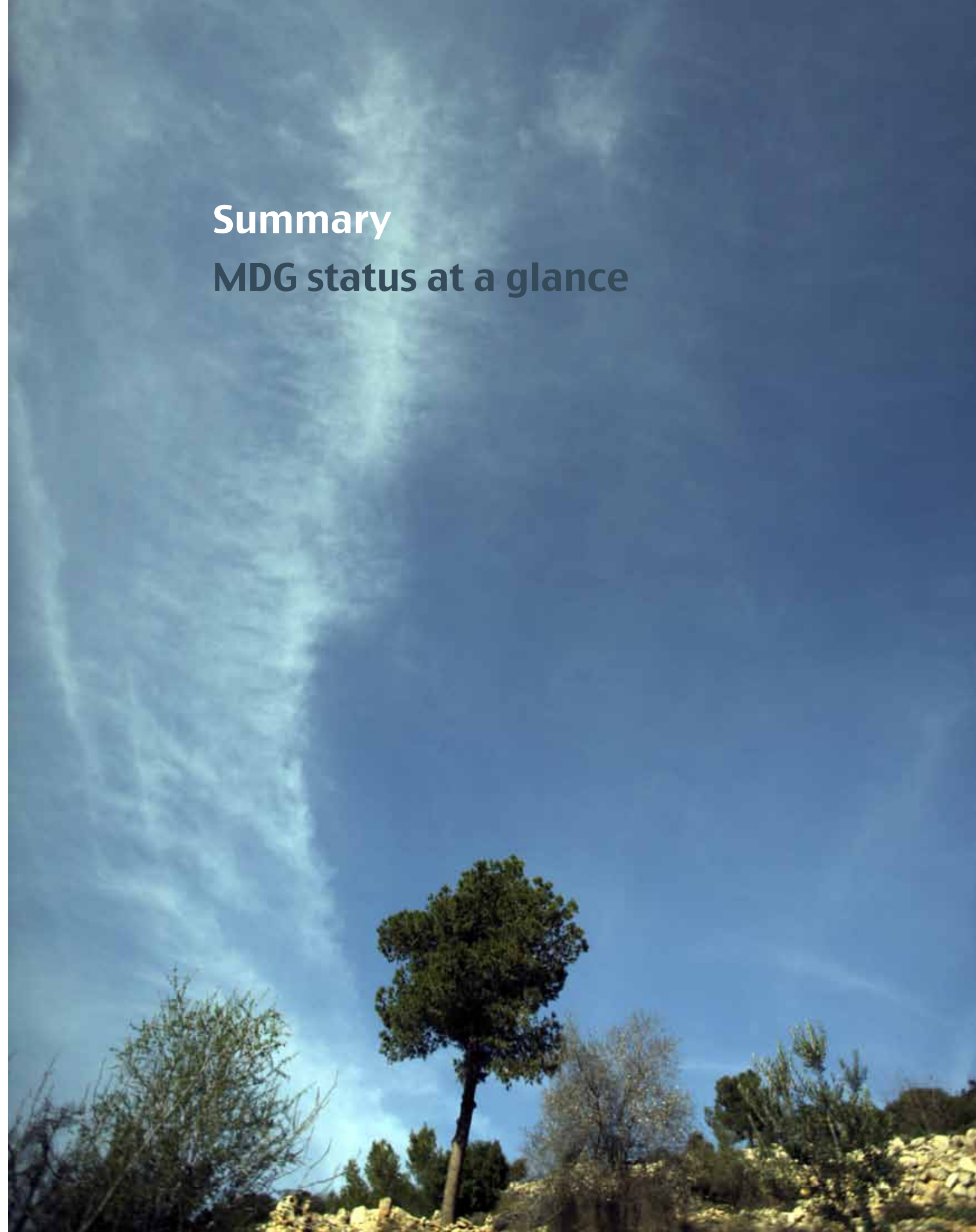
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Summary

MDG status at a glance



Palestine has been under military occupation since 1967. Our situation is very different from other countries currently working towards realization of Millennium Development Goals. Our Government has severely limited access to, and control over, most of our land and natural resources. Freedom of movement of people and goods is severely constrained by a multiplicity of checkpoints, road blocks and the Separation Wall. Our institutions cannot operate in our capital city, East Jerusalem. Citizens in Gaza remain under blockade and reconstruction and recovery efforts to reverse the impact of the 2008/09 military assault are stalled. Our economy is suffocated by the policies of the occupation, precipitating high unemployment and poverty levels.

Our progress towards achieving MDGs is remarkable in the context of the ongoing occupation and blockade; illegal colonization of our land and exploitation of our natural resources; periodic military assaults; and violent attacks on our land and our people by Israeli settlers. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has committed itself to continue strengthening its public institutions as a means both to end the occupation and improve the quality of life of citizens, despite the occupation. The overarching conclusion of this report is that national support for the attainment of MDGs by 2015 remains strong, and that progress made since the PNA was established in 1994 can be sustained. However, nothing short of an end to the occupation and the emergence of a sovereign State of Palestine will create the necessary conditions for significant further progress. The following table summarizes the likelihood of, as well as current trends towards, attainment of MDGs under occupation. It also provides an assessment of the likelihood of attaining MDGs in the event a sovereign State of Palestine is established during 2011, as envisaged in the Government's political program.



Scenario □□□		Sovereignty		Occupation	
Goal		Will goal be met?	National support	Will goal be met?	National support
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Likely	Strong	Unlikely	Strong
				□	□
2	Achieve universal primary education	Likely	Strong	Likely	Strong
				□	□
3	Promote gender equality and empower women	Likely	Strong	Likely	Strong
				□	□
4	Reduce child mortality	Likely	Strong	Unlikely	Strong
				□	□
5	Improve maternal health	Likely	Strong	Potentially	Strong
				□	□
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Likely	Moderate	Likely	Moderate
				□	□
7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Unlikely	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate
				□	□
8	Develop a global partnership for development	Likely	Strong	Unlikely	Strong
				□	□

As the analysis in the remainder of this report makes quite clear, the current trajectory towards attainment of MDGs under occupation is quite different in the West Bank in comparison to Gaza. In general, where positive progress is being made, such progress is slower in Gaza relative to the West Bank. Where regression is taking place, as is the case in relation to poverty and hunger, for example, such regression is much more pronounced in Gaza. In East Jerusalem, where our institutions are prevented from operating, we are virtually powerless to address the needs of Palestinians living there. An immediate end to the ongoing blockade of Gaza is essential to beginning the hard work of rehabilitating its infrastructure, public service and economic activity. This is the only way to tackle and reverse, sustainably, the widening disparity in socio-economic conditions between Gaza and the West Bank.

Introduction the review process



The objective of this MDG review is to present overall progress towards attaining MDGs; to analyze enabling factors as well as those that are inhibitors or 'bottlenecks' to development; to offer substantive equality analysis; and to highlight national policy priorities aimed at both attaining and progressing beyond MDGs.

The review was coordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD). The research and writing team comprised representatives from the government, civil society and the UN; principally, MoPAD, the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), and the United Nations Development Programme - Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), supported by other government ministries and UN agencies.

The review relied primarily on data compiled and reported by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). All data cited is officially published PCBS data, unless otherwise stated. It is important to note the gathering of complete and accurate data on a regular basis is particularly problematic in Palestine, primarily due to constraints imposed on the freedom of flow of people and information both within the West Bank and between the West Bank and Gaza. Furthermore, data cited in relation to the West Bank excludes those parts of Jerusalem annexed by Israel in 1967.

National context: development under occupation

The local development context is dominated by the fact that Palestine has been under military occupation since 1967 which has essentially placed our society and economy under siege for more than four decades. Palestine's development has been

stunted as it has been denied the freedom to engage in the open exchange of ideas, technologies and trade with the outside world for most of the second half of the twentieth century and since the turn of the millennium.

The Government's program, entitled Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State, published in August 2009, outlines a vision for making the State of Palestine a reality. It defines strategic priorities for each ministry and agency to implement with the overall aim of building the institutions of a state over a two-year period. Many of these priorities are directly relevant to, and supportive of, attainment of MDGs. The Government is now in the process of developing the Palestinian National Plan 2011-13, which will outline how national efforts and resources will be deployed to implement its policy priorities.

However, despite its proactive and constructive approach, the Government's ability to implement its development policy agenda remains severely limited by obstacles related to the Israeli occupation and the ongoing expansion of the settlement enterprise. Israeli control over, and neglect of, Area C¹ and East Jerusalem is widening disparities in the economic, social and infrastructure development, as well as basic human security. In areas where the Government has a modicum of access and authority, homes, schools and hospitals are being built and upgraded; in Area C and East Jerusalem, however, homes are being demolished, contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention, and schools and hospitals are deprived of basic supplies. Meanwhile, the people of Gaza are suffering most acutely against the backdrop of high rates of unemployment, poverty and over-crowding, and crumbling infrastructure is deeply compromising the supply of potable water and electricity.

The following review of progress towards MDGs cites just a few of the many ways in which the occupation, colonization and exploitation of our land and natural

¹ Area C refers to the 60% of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, which remains under complete control by the Israeli army vis a vis both civil and security matters.

resources prevent the implementation of our policies and plans, not only to attain MDGs, but to surpass them. As this review makes quite clear, the impact of other external factors such as the global financial crisis, pale into relative insignificance.

Review of progress

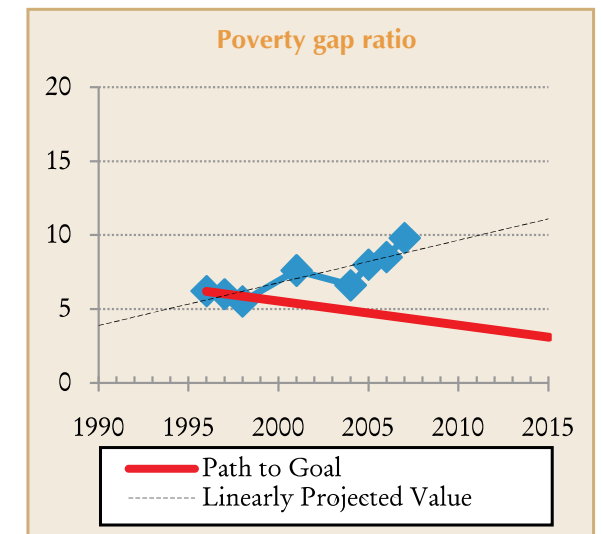
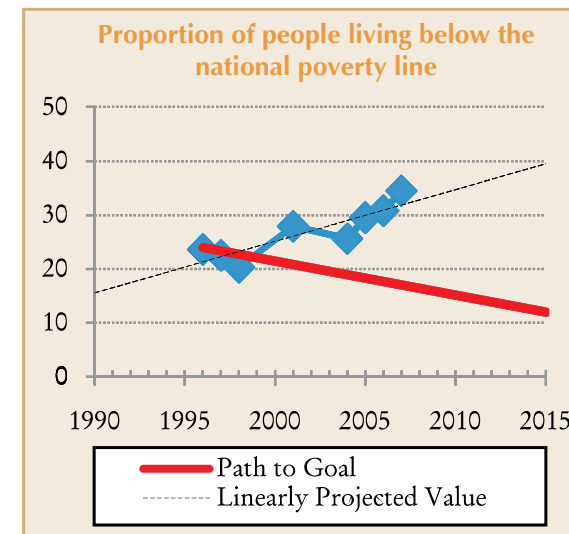


Goal One

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1.A Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day*
 Target 1.B Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
 Target 1.C Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

(* - or below the national poverty line where data is available)



Progress against goals and targets

Target 1.A - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living below the national poverty line

The latest available data indicates that, in 2007, 34.5% of Palestinians live below the national poverty line²: 23.6% in the West Bank and 55.7% in Gaza. Since then, it is certain that poverty levels in Gaza will have increased in the wake of the Israeli military assault and ongoing blockade. Despite some improvement between 1996 and 1998, which saw a decline from 23.6% to 20.3%, the long-term trend is upward. This is in line with the overall trend in the health of the national economy: real GDP per capita declined by almost 40% between 1999 and 2002 and, as of the end of 2009, remains more than 15% below its 1999 level. The impact of this economic contraction on poverty levels has been cushioned somewhat by the provision of food and cash assistance, largely funded by external aid. If this assistance were to be deducted, the World Bank has estimated that poverty rates would climb to 45.7% and 79.4% for the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively.³



The poverty gap ratio, which expresses in percentage terms the average distance from the national poverty line, has been increasing steadily since 1998. In 2007 the gap reached 9.8% in Palestine, 17.6% in Gaza and 5.8% in the West Bank. This represents a 58% increase in the gap from its 1996 level of 6.2%, 12.3% in Gaza and 3.8% in the West Bank. The share of the poorest quintile in national consumption remained stable at just under 11% from 1996 to 2004, but declined to 9.9% in 2007. In the West Bank, the percentage has decreased from 6.2% in 1996 to 4.8% in 2007. In Gaza, the percentage in 2007 was 24.3%, identical to its 1996 level.

Overall, the data indicate steadily increasing poverty that has broadly followed economic growth trends. Poverty indicators improved alongside modest improvements in real GDP per capita between 1995 and 1999 (when real GDP per capita rose by more than 15%), but fell back rapidly as the economy contracted (real GDP per capita fell by 40% between 1999 and 2002).

Target 1.B - Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

The trend in the employment to population ratio is generally in line with the unemployment trend. Between 1995 and 2009, total unemployment rose from 18.2% to 24.8% (from 13.9% to 18.1% in the

² The 2007 poverty line was NIS 2,375 per month (approx. US\$580/month, US\$20 per day) for a family of 2 adults and 4 children.
³ World Bank (2008) 'Palestinian Economic Prospects: Aid, Access and Reform', Sep. 2008

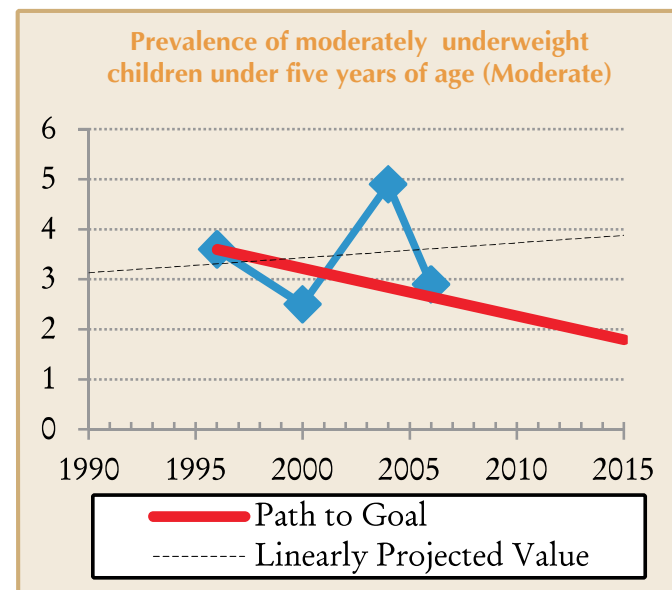
West Bank and from 29.4% to 39.3% in Gaza). As with poverty statistics, these trends in unemployment mirror trends in the broader economy: during the period from 1995 to 1999, total unemployment declined from 18.2% to 11.8% but, since 1999, total unemployment has more than doubled to 24.8%, rising from 9.5% to 18.1% in the West Bank and from 16.9% to 39.3% in Gaza. Unemployment in the West Bank is now significantly below its 2002 peak of 28.2%. In Gaza, however, unemployment has remained on an upward trend. From 1996 to 2009, female employment rose from 9.9% to 11.4%, whilst male employment declined from 52% to 50.8%. The increase in female employment is more pronounced in the West Bank, rising from 11.1% to 14.1% (a total increase of 27%). In Gaza, female employment rose from 5.8% to 6.6% (a 21% increase).

The proportion of employed people living below the poverty line rose significantly from 24.5% in 1996 to 38.4% in 2007. This was punctuated by a reduction to 19.4% in 1998, followed by reversal and steady increase thereafter. The proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment declined from 34.5% in 1996 to 27.2% in 1999, but rose to 40% by 2003 and averaged around 37% between 2004 and 2007. Again, these trends are in line with growth and contraction trends in the national economy.

Target 1.C - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

The prevalence of moderately or severely underweight children under five years old is relatively low in Palestine. The latest data available shows 2.9% underweight overall: 3.2% in the West Bank, 2.4% in Gaza.

However, more recent studies reveal high levels of food insecurity in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. It



is estimated that almost 1.6 million persons (38% of the population) are food insecure.⁴ These include 625,200 food insecure persons in the West Bank (25%) and 973,600 in the Gaza Strip (61%). In addition, 269,300 persons (11%) in the West Bank and 218,950 persons (16%) in the Gaza Strip are vulnerable to food insecurity. While 35% of West Bank households can be considered food secure, only 17% are food secure in the Gaza Strip. Studies of regional and longitudinal variations in food insecurity reveal the significant impact of developments in the political economy.

important factor affecting all groups. During periods of economic growth, all groups have benefitted and, during periods of economic contraction, all groups have suffered. However, in addition to the disparity between Gaza and the West Bank, there are significant inequalities at the level of individual communities living in specific locales most affected by the Separation Wall and communities in the so-called Area C (in which the Israeli authorities place severe restrictions on the government's ability to operate and deliver services).

At a glance: fluctuating political and economic conditions drive food insecurity in Palestine

Urban households significantly suffered from the increased food and fuel prices at the beginning of 2008. PNA employees also suffered hardship in 2006 when salary payments were suspended for around 9 months. In 2007 and 2008, farmers have been affected by adverse climatic events. Others livelihood groups have endured hardship due to ad hoc violence or security measures occurring at different times in the West Bank.

WFP (2009) 'Occupied Palestinian Territory Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Report', December 2009.

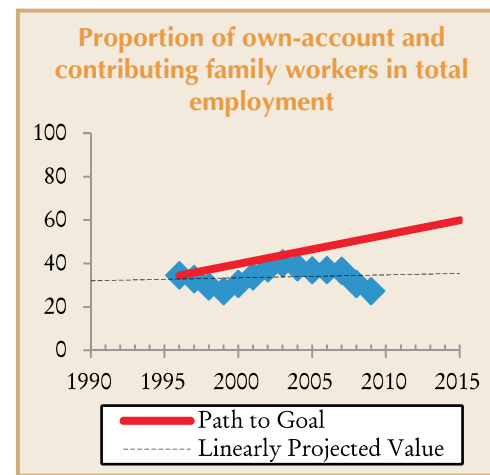
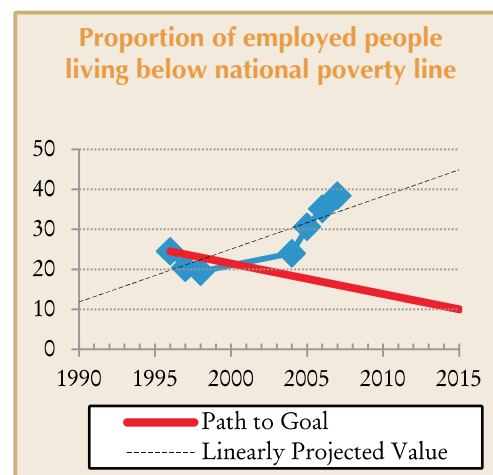
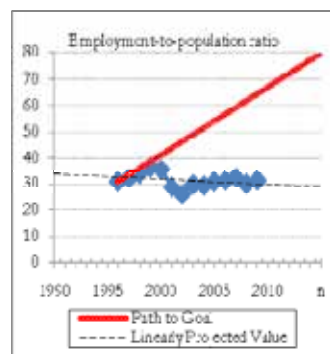
The starkest example of the impact of political-economic volatility in recent times is the effect of the war and ongoing blockade of Gaza. Human rights organizations report a likely worsening of malnutrition levels in Gaza is due not only to the quantity but also the variety of foods available to families.⁵

Equality assessment

The data reveal clear and consistent disparities between Gaza and the West Bank with respect to most indicators of poverty, employment and hunger. Disparities with respect to rural/urban/refugee camp location and gender, however, are less pronounced and not consistent across all indicators. The correlation between measures of poverty, employment and hunger across all groups and the growth/recession in the national economy indicates that the health of the Palestinian economy is the most

Bottlenecks and challenges

The most significant factor constraining achievement of MDG1 is the ongoing occupation and blockade of Palestine by Israel. Until these are brought to an end, Palestine will not be able to implement the significant restructuring of its economy needed to enable private sector-led economic growth and job creation. Under the status quo, policy responses to poverty, hunger and unemployment will remain highly dependent on the continued provision of external aid. As the socio-economic indicators clearly show, even these high levels of external aid (provided directly to citizens and through budget support to fund social assistance) have not been adequate to protect a large proportion of the population from poverty, hunger and unemployment.



4 WFP (2009) 'Occupied Palestinian Territory Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Report', December 2009.
 5 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2008) 'The State of Gaza Strip Border Crossings 1-17 2008' (www.pchrgaza.org)

At a glance: impact of global financial crisis in Palestine

From 2005, peaking in 2008 (before the height of the global economic crisis) there were significant rises in the price of commodities: oil prices fluctuated from US\$65 a barrel in 2005 to US\$147 in 2008. The prices of sugar, rice and wheat also rose, making costs for ordinary Palestinians increasingly unmanageable from 2005 to 2008. The consumer price index for food, from March 2007 to April 2008 rose by 14.6% in the West Bank and 16.3% in Gaza; this translates into an increase of 73 percent in the price of wheat flour in the West Bank and 68 percent in Gaza.¹ As a result of the downturn in the global financial markets and inflated food prices – world food prices have risen by 85% since 2005² – UN agencies have been forced to reduce the amount of food and money distributed to hardship cases.³ In the West Bank in 2008 the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that food packages and money, which were distributed and deemed essential for two months sustenance, had to be distributed every three months due to funding cuts.⁴ The situation is different for refugees however: UNRWA, through an EC supported reform process, has been able to increase the amount of support to hardship cases.

National policy priorities

The Government's primary policy response is to work on several fronts, both domestically and internationally, to end the occupation and blockade and establish a sovereign State of Palestine. The policy agenda underpinning this goal is laid out in detail in the Program of the 13th Government entitled Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State. The program includes policies to: improve the targeting, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the social safety net; strengthen institutions to manage the economy of a sovereign Palestine; and, reforms of the education system to better prepare future generations to engage in productive employment and hence drive and share in the benefits of future economic growth. These policies, inter alia, are critical to ensuring national prosperity, reducing unemployment and eradicating poverty and hunger.

Feasibility of meeting targets

As soon as the occupation and blockade are lifted, achievement of MDG1 targets in Palestine is highly likely within a time frame of five years. This will, of course, require rapid and concerted policy actions to rebuild Palestine's infrastructure and economy, with special focus on geographic areas that have been most affected by years of occupation and neglect – particularly Gaza, Area C and locales close to the Separation Wall.

Under the status quo, however, achievement of MDG1 targets is unlikely.

Goal Two

Achieve universal primary education

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Progress against goals and targets

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

According to Ministry of Education statistics, net enrolment in basic education rose from 87.5% in 1994/95 to 95.6% for male and 98.7% for female in 2008/09. Enrolment is equitable with respect to gender. The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade reached 99.4%, rising from 98.3% in 2000.

The literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men, has been consistently high in Palestine, rising from 96.7% in 1995 to 99.2% in 2005 through 2008. The literacy rate of 15-24 year olds is close to 100%, with high levels and limited variance between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and between females and males. The adult literacy rate is 94.1%. In a regional comparison of literacy rates Palestine performs extremely well; the literacy rate in Jordan 91.1% and in Egypt it is 66.4%.⁶

Equality assessment

The data reveal few significant disparities with respect to geographical location and rural/urban location, and gender. However, there are special challenges in East Jerusalem where the Israeli government has complete control over the system and material PNA influence is proscribed. Due to the permit system, and movement and access restrictions imposed by Israel, teachers from the West Bank are commonly

prevented from gaining access to Jerusalem. There is also a shortage of places for Palestinian students in Jerusalem; approximately 5,000 pupils do not have places at school every year. Girls are more affected by this shortage as it is more difficult for them to move to attend schools far from their homes.

There are also severe deficiencies in the quality of the learning environment in both Gaza and Area C, where the PNA is effectively prevented from reconstructing and rehabilitating damaged and decaying schools. Furthermore, children living in communities isolated by the Separation Wall are not always able to attend classes due to the closure of checkpoints.

Bottlenecks and challenges

Restrictions on the movement and access of students and teachers imposed by Israel continue to pose a challenge to attainment of MDG2. However, with the exception of East Jerusalem, the government has been successful in implementing coping strategies. Population growth, and hence rising student population, will continue to place rising demands on the capacity of the education system and, whilst the occupation continues, external financing of ongoing school construction and refurbishment programs will be needed.

National policy priorities

The Government is committed to ensuring that progress towards MDG's remains on track. However, Government policy with respect to education is increasingly focused on improving quality. Key policy priorities include

modernization of the curriculum, strengthened teacher training programs, increased use of ICT in education, investment in scientific research and investment in technical and vocational education.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Achievement of MDG1 targets by 2015 is highly likely. Under continued occupation, this will require external financing to maintain sufficient absorptive capacity in the education system.



⁶ UNDP (2010) 'Human Development Index'

Goal Three Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Progress against goals and targets

The ratio of girls to boys in basic education increased from 95% in 1995 to 98% in 2009. In secondary education, girls now outnumber boys: the ratio increased from 84% in 1998 to 114% in 2000. Similarly, in tertiary education the ratio of females increased from 87% in 1994 to 117% in 2008.

The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has been increasing gradually from 15.6% in 1996 to 18% in 2008. The ratio of women in non-agricultural paid employment is higher in the West Bank (19.4%) than in Gaza Strip (14.4%), but both locations have witnessed growth of just under 20% between 1996 and 2008.

The proportion of seats held by women in national parliament stood at 12.9%, more than doubling from a level of 5.7% after the 1996 elections. The proportion of seats held by women in local councils also increased from 2% to 18% between 2000 and 2005. All major political parties have quotas for women in their governing bodies and a quota system has been established to increase the participation of women in the parliament and in local councils.⁷ Furthermore, almost 25% of members of the Council of Ministers are female.

Equality Assessment

Available data show disparities between Gaza and West Bank, and also between rural and urban localities. These disparities largely reflect the

⁷ UNDP (2009) 'Gendered Impacts of Violence, Insecurity and Disintegration in Palestine' Draft, 10 Sep. 2009.



different pace of change in social and cultural norms in different areas of the country. The establishment of a sovereign state of Palestine, throughout which all citizens are free to travel and interact socially, will help accelerate a trend towards gender equality that has, so far, been most prevalent in the urban areas.

Bottlenecks and Challenges

Although there have been many important achievements towards gender equality in recent years, mainly in the areas of education and the political participation, continued effort is needed, especially in economic participation. Continued institutional and legal reform is needed to ensure that women are treated equally under the law and enjoy equal opportunities alongside men.

National policy priorities

Over the last 15 years, significant progress has been made to promote gender equality and empower women and the Government's policy agenda has become increasingly focused on gender equality issues. Gender equality throughout the education system is an important achievement. However, the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008-2010 and the Program of the 13th Government place particular emphasis on the empowerment of women. Also, the Palestinian National Plan 2011-13 incorporates a cross-cutting gender strategy which, inter alia, envisages progressive legal reform to eliminate any aspects of gender-based discrimination for Palestine's body of laws and regulations.

Furthermore, on 8 March 2009 President Abbas signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Palestinian Council of Ministers also took an important decision that empower women and eliminate discrimination, including establishing a national committee to address violence against women and institutional reforms to ensure more gender-sensitive policy formulation and budgeting.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Achievement of MDG3 targets by 2015 is likely. Target 3.A has already been achieved. Government policy is now focused not only maintaining gender equality through the education system, but also on further economic and political empowerment of women.

Goal Four

Reduce child mortality

Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate⁵

Progress against goals and targets

Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

The under-five mortality rate dropped from 33.2 per 1,000 live births in the years of 1990-1994 to 28.2 per 1,000 for the years 2005-2006. This corresponds to a 15% decrease compared with the target of 67%. Child mortality rates are significantly higher in Gaza compared to the West Bank. The infant mortality rate⁸ dropped from 27.3 per 1,000 live births in the years of 1990-1994 to 25.3 per 1,000 for the years 2005-2006 – a decline of 7%. The rate in Gaza in 2005-06 (29.0) is significantly higher than in the West Bank (23.2).

The proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles almost doubled from 49.0% in 1996 to 96.8% in 2006. In Gaza, the immunization was 99.2% in 2005-06, compared with 95.1% in the West Bank.

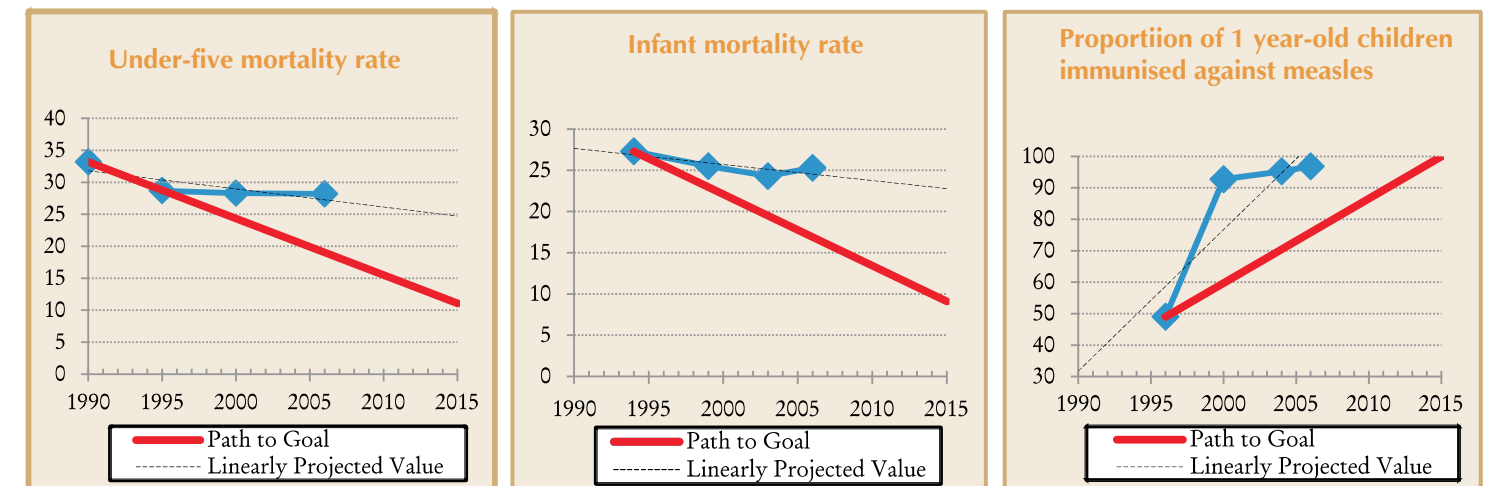
Equality assessment

Child mortality is relatively high in Gaza, aggravated by the ongoing siege. According to UNICEF, approximately 320,000 children in Gaza are under 5 years of age, including about 40,000 infants under 6 months of age who are malnourished. Even before the war on Gaza, 50,000 children in Gaza were malnourished; more than two thirds of all children suffered from Vitamin A deficiency and almost half of

children under the age of two were anemic.⁹

There is a significant variability in infant mortality by locality: since 2000 infant mortality in the refugee camps has improved, whilst worsening in urban and rural areas. About 67% of infant deaths in both the West Bank and Gaza areas are due to neonatal deaths (child age 0 - 28 days).¹⁰ Most newborn deaths are preventable, assuming the mother and child have access to quality childbirth and health care services. Movement and access restrictions across Palestine, which intensified after 2000, lead to reduced access to specialist health facilities.

⁹ MIFTAH / UNFPA (2009) 'Palestine Report In Preparation for ICPD 15, December, 2009.
¹⁰ Ibid.



Bottlenecks and challenges

Restrictions on the movement and access place constraints on the availability of health care services for mothers and their children. Also, the siege of Gaza is compromising the health care system as well as the general welfare of children. Lifting of restrictions and the blockade would have a significant impact on general living conditions and access to quality health services across both the West Bank and Gaza. This in turn would likely have a very significant positive impact on child mortality rates.

National policy priorities

The Government will continue its ongoing work to increase access to primary health care facilities. However, the main policy priority likely to have a transformational impact of child mortality is the 13th Government's overall goal to end the occupation and establish the State of Palestine. The resultant rise in general standards of living, nutrition and access to higher quality health services would have a rapid and material impact on maternal and child health. The Palestinian National Plan 2011-13 will include specific targets to reduce infant and child mortality in line with MDGs.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Based on current trend, continuation of the status quo in which Palestine remains under occupation and Gaza remains under blockade, attainment of target 4.A is unlikely. If the occupation and blockade are ended, achievement of the target in Palestine is highly likely within a time frame of five years.



⁸ The infant mortality rate is the probability (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births) of a child born in a specified year dying before reaching the age of one.

Goal Five

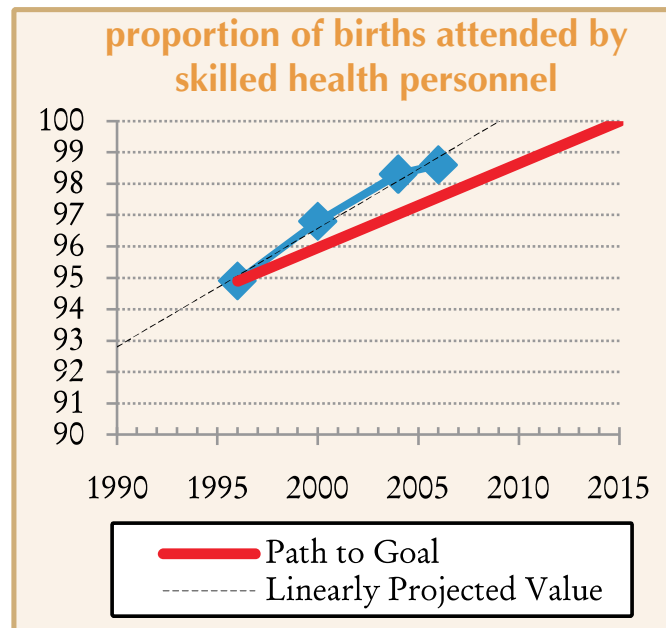
Improve maternal health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio⁶
 Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Progress against goals and targets

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

The Ministry of Health estimated the maternal mortality ratio at 38 per 100,000 in 2009¹¹, indicating a significant (approximately 50%) improvement from 70-80 per 100,000 estimated by PCBS in 1995. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased from 94.9% in 1996 to 98.6% in 2006.

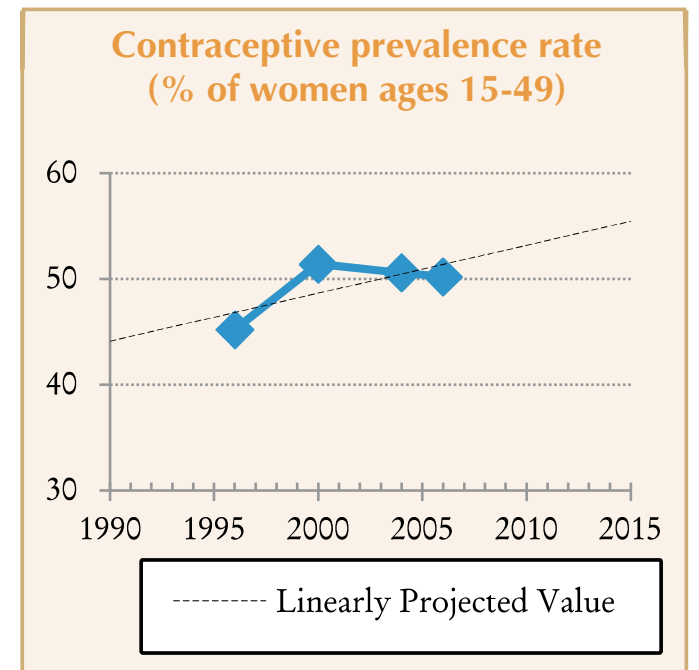


Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

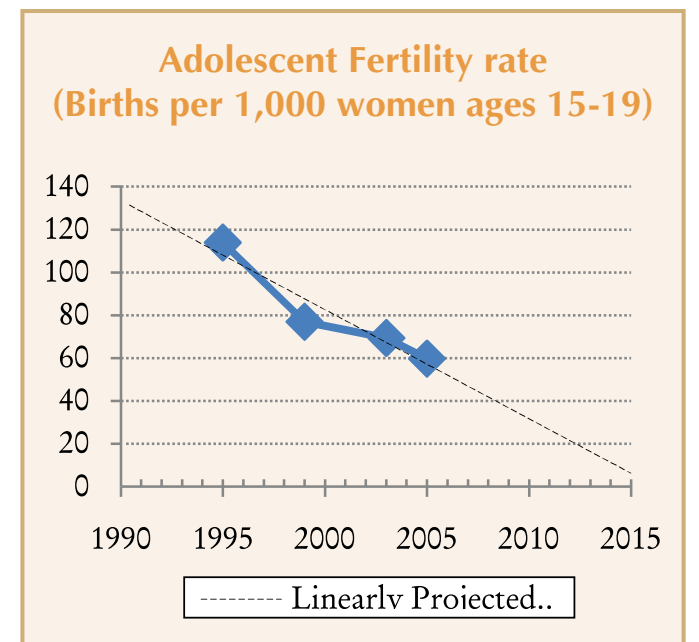
¹¹ Ministry of Health, 2010, Progress on Health Goals report, National Information center, MoH, Palestine



The contraceptive prevalence rate increased from 45.2% in 1996 to 50.2% in 2006. In the West Bank, the rate in 2006 was 54.9% compared with 41.7% in Gaza. Recent surveys suggest there are numerous factors that inhibit the use of contraceptive methods including social and cultural considerations, desire



for more children, and medical safety concerns.¹² Between 1995 and 2005, the adolescent birth rate¹³ decreased from 114 births per 1,000 to 59.8. In the West Bank, the rate fell from 100 to 55.2 (45%) and, in the Gaza Strip, from 144 to 67.4 (76.6%).



¹² PCBS (2009) 'Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Statistical Report' January, 2009

¹³ The annual number of births to women aged 15 to 19 years per 1,000 women in that age group.

Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit)¹⁴ increased from 95.6% in 2000 to 99% in 2006. In the West Bank, the rate increased from 94.0 to 98.7 during that period and, in Gaza, it rose from 98.3 to 99.0. Therefore, whilst the West Bank previously lagged behind Gaza, the gap has now been closed. Antenatal care coverage (at least four visits)¹⁵ increased from 87.0% in 2000 to 88.8% in 2006. In the West Bank, the rate increased from 84.4 to 86.3 during that period and, in Gaza, it rose from 91.5 to 93.

Data related to unmet need for family planning is scarce. A 2006 survey indicated that only 12.4% of married women of reproductive age have indicated difficulties in accessing family planning facilities.¹⁶

Equality assessment

Overall, equality gaps between Gaza and the West Bank in relation to maternal health are less pronounced than those observed in relation to other MDGs (especially poverty and hunger). In fact, Gaza is ahead of the West Bank in relation to provision of skilled healthcare at birth as well as antenatal care. This is primarily driven by lower rates in rural areas of the West Bank, where movement and access restrictions tend to have a greater impact on women's ability to access maternal health care.

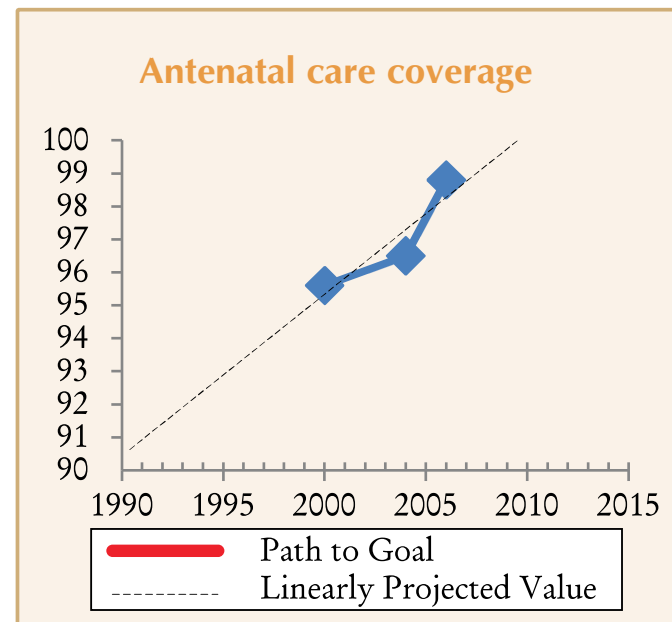
Bottlenecks and challenges

Restrictions on the movement and access place constraints on the availability of maternal health care services, particularly in rural areas of the West Bank. There are issues with the availability and quality of data, especially in relation to the maternal mortality ratio. The Ministry of Health has started to address these limitations in data availability: since 2009 a surveillance system has been implemented in the West Bank that records maternal deaths through

¹⁴ The percentage of women aged 15 to 49 with a live birth in a given time period who received antenatal care provided by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses, or midwives) at least once during pregnancy.

¹⁵ The percentage of women aged 15 to 49 with a live birth in a given time period who received antenatal care provided by skilled health personnel (doctors, nurses, or midwives) at least four times during pregnancy.

¹⁶ PCBS (2009) 'Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Statistical Report' January, 2009



active case finding and linking vital records.

National policy priorities

The Government's policy agenda includes specific measures to address deficits in public service delivery in certain areas of the West Bank, particularly in Area C and affected by the Separation Wall. However, Israel's restrictions on movement of people and upgrading of infrastructure represent a major barrier to the implementation of these measures.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Achievement of MDG5 targets by 2015 is likely. Target 5.A has already been substantially achieved. In relation to target 5.B, though there is room for progress in relation to family planning, adolescent birth rates have declined very significantly and access to antenatal care is very high.

Goal Six

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Target 6.B: Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs
- Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Progress against goals and targets

The HIV/AIDS infection levels in Palestine are extremely low. Up to 2009, the Ministry of Health, reported only 66 cases of HIV/AIDS (51 AIDS, 15 HIV). Most infectious diseases have been virtually eliminated in Palestine, largely due to a series of successful immunization and early disclosure programs. There have been no reported cases of cholera, rabies, malaria and poliomyelitis in many years. Hepatitis A, B and C are more common, although in recent years Hepatitis B has been successfully targeted through vaccination.

Bottlenecks and challenges

With such low infection rates in Palestine, the main challenge going forward is likely to be to maintain this high standard in the face of changing social and cultural conditions. In particular, whilst the ending of the occupation and the establishment of the State of Palestine will open the way for Palestinians to fulfill their huge potential, it will also lead to a significant rise in social mobility both within Palestine and overseas. This will create new risks in relation to the spread of infectious diseases.

National policy priorities

Government policy priorities in relation to curbing the spread of infectious disease are to continue to implement successful immunization programs, continue to raise public awareness of risk factors (especially through the education system), and further develop health care strategies to ensure effective

policy planning to address new risk factors likely to emerge with independent statehood.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Targets 6.A, 6.B and 6.C have limited relevance in Palestine, where infection rates have been extremely low for many years. However, the Government will continue to develop and implement policies to ensure there is no regression.



Goal Seven

Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers (not applicable in Palestine)

Progress against goals and targets

Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources/ Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

The proportion of land area covered by forest in 2006 was only 1.57. The forested area in the West Bank (1.61%) is double that of Gaza (.88%). The reserved land for biodiversity was less than 1% in 2007. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita per US dollar were 0.6944 kg in 2003, significantly below Israel (10.7kg) and other developed nations. There is limited statistical information of the fish stocks off the coast of Gaza, however, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs commented that “fish stocks have depleted”.¹⁷ This may be due to pollution – the Gaza coastline is now polluted by untreated sewage – but also over-fishing close to the shore due to Israeli restrictions and attacks on fishermen.¹⁸

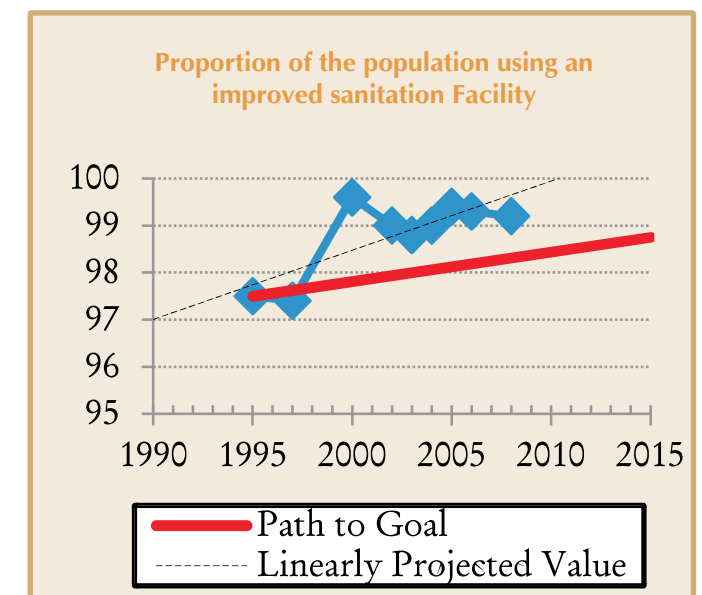
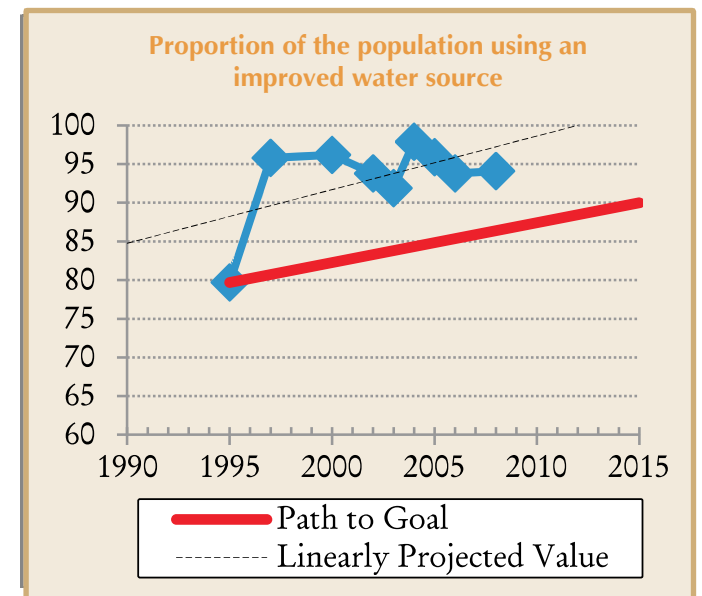
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

¹⁷ OCHA-oPt (2007) ‘Palestinians harmed by fishing restrictions off Gaza, say UN aid officials’, 19 Apr. 2007.

¹⁸ Under current restrictions, Palestinians are allowed to fish only up to three nautical miles off the Gaza coast, despite the fact a deal in 2002 between the UN and Israel allowed for fishing up to 12 miles off the coast and the Oslo Accords of 1993 authorised fishing rights for up to 20 miles.



The proportion of the population using an improved water source¹⁹ increased from 79.7% in 1995 to 94.1% in 2008. This equates to a 71% reduction in the proportion of the population who do not have access to an improved water source. The proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility increased from 97.5% in 1995 to 99.2% in 2008. This equates to a 68% reduction in the proportion of the population who do not have access to an improved sanitation facility.



Equality assessment

Overall, equality gaps between Gaza and the West Bank and between rural/urban locations in relation to access to improved drinking water and improved sanitation facilities are quite small. The most sizeable difference is in the proportion of the population using an improved drinking water source, where only 90.3% of the rural population saw improvement in 2008, compared with 94.1% overall. However, this does mask very significant differences in water

¹⁹ The percentage of the population who use any of the following types of water supply for drinking: piped water, public tap, borehole or pump, protected well, protected spring or rainwater. Improved water sources do not include vendor-provided water, bottled water, tanker trucks or unprotected wells and springs. The indicator monitors access to improved water sources based on the assumption that improved sources are likely to provide safe water.

quantity and quality which, whilst not specifically covered by MDG7, are major issues for the population of Palestine, with Gaza being most severely affected.

At a glance: water quantity and quality in Palestine

The global Human Development Report 2006 noted that, per capita, Palestinians (especially in Gaza) experience one of the highest levels of water scarcity in the world. In 7% of Palestinian communities (43 out of 708), per capita supply is less than or equal to 30 liters per day; in 36% (225 communities) it is between 30 and 50 liters per day; in 41% (264 communities) it is between 50 and 100 liters per day; and finally, only in 16% (100) of these communities does the per capita supply exceed 100 liters per day, which is the minimum amount recommended by WHO.⁷

Water quality continues to deteriorate resulting in the spread of waterborne diseases. About 85% of Palestinians infected by such diseases originate from communities without a wastewater network.⁸ Only 7% of the available water in the Gaza Strip meets WHO standards. It is estimated that the over-extraction of the coastal aquifer to approximately double the sustainable limit in 2000 is now reaching dangerous levels.⁹ The lowering of the water table coupled with increased salination through sea water intrusion and raw sewage pollution compromises both the quality and quantity of available water; 90-95% of its water is contaminated and unfit for human consumption.¹⁰ Almost 60% of reported diseases in the Gaza Strip are water related, including cholera, dysentery, hepatitis, and yellow fever.¹¹

The overall quality of sanitation in Palestine is also a major concern, affecting the vast majority of the population across the West Bank and Gaza. The problem is driven primarily by the lack of an integrated national infrastructure network for wastewater treatment.

At a glance: sanitation in Palestine

93% of the generated wastewater in the West Bank is released to the environment without treatment.¹² Only 12% of Palestinian communities have a waste water collection system and only one waste water treatment plant is operating well. Wastewater collection and treatment in rural areas is virtually non-existent.¹³ Few villages (1 to 2%) have succeeded in installing wastewater collection systems.¹⁴ In rural Palestinian areas that use cesspits to dispose of waste water but most lack a cement basement or liner to prevent infiltration into the earth layers and pollution of ground water.

Bottlenecks and challenges

Inadequate infrastructure for water extraction and distribution and for wastewater treatment, as well as denied access to Palestine's water resources, is a major constraint to ensuring that the entire population of Palestine enjoys access to an adequate supply safe drinking water and good sanitation systems. This state of affairs is primarily driven by the occupation and colonization and, as such, represents a largely man-made crisis.

At a glance: examples of the impact of occupation and colonization on water supply

Exploitation of the western and coastal aquifers – the most important sources of water for Palestinians – is a major driver of water scarcity. Average per capita water use by Israeli settlers in the West Bank is nine times higher than by Palestinians.¹⁵ Palestinian per capita access to water resources in the West Bank is a quarter of Israeli access and is declining.¹⁶ There are similar problems with the waters from the coastal aquifer due to high rates of extraction by Israel.

The Separation Wall is located on the productive zones of Palestinian aquifers; 39 groundwater wells have been isolated from their Palestinian communities and an additional 14 wells are threatened for demolition in the wall's buffer zone.¹⁷ Although there are approximately 700 million cm/yr of groundwater resources in Palestinian areas of the West Bank, only around 112 million cm/yr (15%) are available to Palestinians.¹⁸

In Area C, restrictions on the construction of water infrastructure have led many communities to rely on tankered water for domestic and livestock uses. Vulnerable to closures, curfews and checkpoints, drivers have been forced to take convoluted routes to get to their destination resulting in higher water prices. The high cost of water puts an additional strain on already impoverished and marginalized communities.

Due to severe draconian restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation, major infrastructure investment projects are subject to long delays and have limited prospects of success.

At a glance: Rujib Well, under construction since 2003¹⁹

A new well in Rujib, on the south-east edge of Nablus, has been under construction since 2003. The well is intended to increase the water supply to Nablus and to provide water to a group of 10 nearby villages, whose 50,000 inhabitants have no running water and are waiting eagerly for the well to become functional and for their villages to be connected to it. After an application process spanning several years, Nablus municipality secured the required permit from the Israeli army and the necessary funds from international donors and the project began in 2003, funded by USAID. A borehole was drilled but, before the pump and other equipment could be installed, the project was frozen after the results of the local municipal elections, which rendered the ineligible of the Municipality of Rujib for USAID funding. This situation was compounded by the results of the national elections. However, the project was kept on track by ICRC funding. In February 2008, however, as the well was in its final stages of construction, the Israeli army ordered the work to stop and demanded that the site of the well be moved 25 meters to the east. No explanation was given to either the municipality or the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA). Eventually, a compromise solution was negotiated, whereby the site would be moved eastwards by some 15 meters instead of 25, though still at considerable cost and delay.

National policy priorities

The Government enacted the Palestinian Environment Act No. 7 in 1999, which codifies attempts to combat the depletion of the ozone layer in accordance

with international treaties. The implementation of the Act requires appropriate procedures for importing, production or use of any chemicals that cause any harm. Despite very limited control over land and natural resources, the Government has made a concerted effort to draft and implement environmental laws. Implementation requires a strong partnership for development and the cooperation of Israel and the international community in protecting the environment. There was a modest increase in forestation, through nationally adopted policies to encourage the expansion of green areas, prohibiting misuse of green areas and discouraging de-forestation by supplementing alternative sources of energy for daily use.

The Government's policy agenda includes specific measures to address deficits in public infrastructure and service delivery in Gaza and marginalized areas of the West Bank, particularly Area C and areas affected by the Separation Wall. Furthermore, the Government is developing plans for the construction of national water and wastewater infrastructure networks needed to ensure a sustainable water supply and sanitation systems throughout the State of Palestine.

Feasibility of meeting targets

Achievement of MDG targets by 7.A and 7.B is unlikely. The constraints imposed on access to land and other natural resources prevent the collection of sufficiently comprehensive and accurate data needed to track environmental status, let alone to implement environmental protection policies.

Target 7.C has ostensibly been achieved. However, there are major issues related to quantity and quality of supply and service in the water and wastewater sectors which need urgent attention. The Government has worked extensively to develop policies and plans to address these issues, but their implementation is largely proscribed by restrictions imposed by the occupation.

Even with the lifting of the occupation and siege, it will take several years to reverse the impact of decades of de-development and illegal exploitation of our natural resources.



Goal Eight

Develop a global partnership for development

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally)

Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction) (not applicable in Palestine)

Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly) (not applicable in Palestine)

Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term) (not applicable in Palestine)

Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries (not applicable in Palestine)

Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - both nationally and internationally)



Palestine has demonstrated strong commitment to developing an open, rule-based trading and financial system, and also good governance, development and poverty reduction. We have made significant progress in building institutions, including the passage of some of the most progressive laws in the Arab world and the peaceful conduct of free and fair local and national elections. However, progress has been frustrated, and sometimes reversed, by insecurity and political and economic instability driven primarily by the illegal occupation of our homeland. The 13th Government, mindful of the need to restore the trust of citizens in its capacity to govern despite the occupation, has redoubled efforts to bring safety, security and good governance to Palestine. Continued progress can and must be made to upgrade all Palestinian institutions of government. By delivering on a challenging reform agenda, we are trying to maintain a secure and stable internal environment in which social and economic development can take place and which, ultimately, will create the institutional infrastructure of the Palestinian state.

The Government is doing everything in its power to ensure that the MDGs are met by 2015, despite the occupation, and views this work as an important pillar of its state-building efforts. However, the requirements of MDG8 place the burden of responsibility for MDG attainment on Member States of the United Nations (including Israel). An independent, sovereign Palestine on the June 1967 borders with a territorial link between the West Bank and Gaza, and with East Jerusalem restored as its social, cultural and economic hub, has enormous potential for economic growth and social development. If liberated from restrictions on movement and access of goods and people, free to trade and engage fully with the international community of nations, and free to develop and utilize all of Palestine's land and other natural resources, our society and economy will grow and thrive and our dependence on external aid will quickly be reduced.

At a glance: impact of global financial crisis in Palestine

Despite fears to the contrary, there has been no drastic decrease in overseas development assistance to Palestine as result of the global economic downturn. However, it is estimated that remittances from Palestinian Diaspora – amounting to approximately US\$300 million per annum – fell by around 20%.²⁰

Target 8.F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication

The number of telephone lines per capita increased from 6.1% of the population in 1998 to 9.7% in 2009 (a 60% increase). The number of cellular telephone subscribers has grown exponentially during the same period, from 2.6% of the population to 33.9%. The rate of internet access increased from 5.4% in 2000 to 22.9% in 2009.