

Present Consumption in the Region

Table 3 is a comparison between the present water consumption in some Middle East countries. While the Palestinian per-capita consumption per day is estimated at 50-70 liters (with some areas receiving the meager amount of 19 liters), Israel's consumption is 350 liters, about five times higher. The minimum water consumption per person recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) is 100 liters per day.

Country	Domestic	Agriculture	Industry	Total
Jordan	78	739.5	43.5	870
Israel	672	1,365	129	2,166
West Bank	57	89	Included in domestic	146
Gaza Strip	50	85	Included in domestic	135

Sources: For Jordan: *Middle East Regional Water Supply and Demand Development Study*, 1998, <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/80859e/80859E02.htm#Hydrography>; for Israel: *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, No. 51, 2000; for the WBS: PWA, *Water Sector Strategic Plan*, 2000.

Agriculture comprised 24% of the Palestinian GDP in 1966, the same percentage as in 1980-85. (*Special Report: The Socio-Economic Impact of Settlement on Land, Water and the Palestinian Economy*, Washington, DC: Foundation for Middle East Peace, July 1998). Today, it contributes approx. 10-14% of the Palestinian GDP and generates some 25% of all Palestinian exports. Since the sector suffers from restricted water resources, over 90% of the cultivated WB area depends on rain-fed farming methods. In contrast, Israel irrigates over 50% of its cultivated land, although the agricultural sector contributes less than 3% to its GDP (MOPIC, *Valuable Agricultural Areas in the West Bank Governorates*, Ramallah, 1998).



Regional Water Demand Projections for 2020

The increase in the water demand with time is a consequence of many factors including natural population growth and economic growth of water consuming sectors. Table 4 provides data on the water demand projection for the three main economic sectors in Jordan, Israel and Palestine. Since aquifers are already overused, the only solution to provide enough water for the Palestinians is to reallocate the fresh water resources between Israel and Palestine. This reallocation must be fair and equitable, and must ensure the sustainability of the fresh water resources. Assuming that Israel accepts the principle of reallocation there will remain a water deficit for both parties that must be filled by new water resources such as desalinated water or the reuse of treated wastewater.

	Israel	Palestine	Jordan
2000	105	50	74
2010	115	57	72
2040	145	83	86

Source: *Middle East Regional Water Supply and Demand Development Study*, 1998.

Critical Problems Associated with Water in Palestine

► Inadequate Water Supply

The continual shortage of water for all economic sectors in Palestine and the steady increase in water demand for drinking and irrigation have increased the risks of groundwater depletion and contamination caused by the over-pumping of old wells. The increased pumping has led to rising operating costs and the drying-up of existing boreholes.

Industrial and agricultural production is impossible without water. The water consumption per produced unit of crops is high, especially for vegetables and fruit. In Palestine, intensive agriculture is dependent on irrigation but there is little access to irrigation water.