

Palestine's Official Statistics

High Visibility in a Fragile Environment

Courtesy of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

The UN adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics is pivotal to the process of empowering official statistics, as these principles strongly and clearly call for the enforcement of professional independence and scientific methods in producing statistics. But the principles are not at all sufficient if only treated as formal statements. It is essential to bring them to life in everyday practice and to defend them where necessary. They are essential to ensure public trust in national statistical systems through professional independence and impartiality of statisticians, their use of scientific and transparent methods to produce appropriate and reliable data that adhere to certain professional and scientific standards.

Professional independence in official statistics – from the public perspective – comes as a result of consistent practices of the National Statistics Office. It is a process that requires hard work, professional ethics, distinct organizational identity, and competent professional staff. All this is available at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) through the skilled statistical professionals who represent the bureau. Reliable services and attentiveness to users build credibility.

The Council of Ministers in Palestine adopted the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in 2005 and the Code of Practice in 2006. These steps have contributed significantly to the development of Palestine's official statistics system. The PCBS operates in a fragile environment that affects the setting of its priorities. Despite this fact, the PCBS has maintained a reputable image that has been shaped by its professional independence, strong national and international recognition, expert power in the field of official statistics, and credibility among users and stakeholders, as well as an organizational culture that is based on continuous

learning, innovation, and a strong presence in local community. The PCBS reputation exceeds the boundaries of Palestine, as evidenced by the formal and informal recognition of the quality of statistics and management of statistical operations by the international statistical community. The subscription to the Special Data Dissemination Standard of the IMF that was accepted on April 19, 2012, is a case in point, as well as the recent European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Committed to Excellence International Award.

PCBS contributes to the development of Arab and international statistical systems through its substantive contributions and leadership in promoting the value of official statistics. In recognition of its integrity, professional independence, and quality of work, the PCBS is part of international and regional bodies as head of the International Association of Official Statistics, and as a member of the UN High Level Group on Partnership and Statistical Capacity Building, the Board of the Arab Institute for Research and Training in Statistics, the Bureau of the Statistical Committee of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and others.

The PCBS experience has shown that official decisions and formal statements are necessary to pave the way for the enforcement of change and the modernization of the national statistical system. Yet what really counts is the government support, the mutually beneficial cooperation with partners, the continuous assessment of priorities, and the support of partners

during the process of producing official statistics. Specific attention must be given to the building and maintenance of trust by all stakeholders, including policy makers, the media, research communities, and the public at large.

The PCBS is a learning organization that strives continuously to develop its operations and services to increase efficiency and provide quality statistics to strategically meet the increasing demands of users and stakeholders. PCBS recognizes the volume of challenges ahead but its determination stems from the support of partners and its belief in its mandate as Palestine's provider of official statistics. The PCBS has high public visibility, and it is viewed by other national institutions of the Palestinian state as a role model, which obliges it to function in a manner that is socially and ethically sound.

The PCBS was founded in 1993 as the National Statistical Institute of Palestine. The legal basis for PCBS and its work is the General Statistics Law and its bylaws. The PCBS is a government institution that enjoys a judicial character and is directly accountable to the Council of Ministers.

- i. The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/261 on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics on January 29, 2014. These principles were first adopted globally by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994. The UN Economic Commission for Europe adopted the Principles in 1992 as a political decision.
- ii. Adopted by the Palestinian Legislative Council on June 8, 2000.

Palestine would like to acknowledge:



Desmond Tutu

An outspoken South African archbishop and a symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, Tutu repeatedly called for an end to Israeli apartheid and the implementation of the rights of the Palestinian people. He also endorsed BDS.

Palestine would like to acknowledge:



Roger Waters

A musician and Pink Floyd star, Waters joined the Palestinian quest for freedom after a visit to the West Bank in 2006. Since then, he has been a supporter and an advocate of BDS. Waters graffitied on the apartheid Wall: "We don't need no thought control."