

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The West Bank is that part of mandatory Palestine which was annexed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1950, in the wake of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49 and the establishment of the State of Israel. The name is based on the fact that the said territory falls west of the river Jordan, whereas to the east of it lies the East Bank, the other part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The West Bank remained under the Hashemite rule for seventeen years until the Six Day War in June 1967 when it was totally occupied by Israel, in addition to the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Desert. Since 1967 the occupied territories have been governed by Israel through local military administrations affiliated to the Ministry of Defence in Tel Aviv.

During the course of the fourteen years under Israeli occupation, the West Bank has undergone a wide range of transformations which have touched on all its socio-economic institutions and facets of life. These changes have been so profound, pervasive, and unpredictable that they require comprehensive evaluation and constant monitoring by those Palestinian and international bodies which are concerned with the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This study on West Bank agriculture is a contribution in that direction, since it deals with a sector which has a special significance in the country's economic, social and political life.

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in the West Bank economy, whether in terms of its share of the Gross Domestic Product (often exceeding 30%) or share of the employed labour force (20-40%).