



## Economic and Social Council

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### 61. Negev Coexistence Forum

**Title:** Advancing Inclusive Development Through Recognition and Participation: A Call for Justice for the Arab-Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF), an Israeli Jewish-Arab human rights organization with special consultative status, promotes equality and the rights of Arab-Bedouin citizens in the Negev/Naqab. Our work focuses on ensuring civil inclusion, land rights, access to services, and dignity for Indigenous Bedouin communities, often excluded from national development frameworks.

The Arab-Bedouin population in the Negev/Naqab—citizens of the State of Israel—face systemic barriers that contradict the 2030 Agenda’s promise to “leave no one behind.” Approximately 100,000 people live in 35 unrecognized villages, which are denied basic infrastructure such as electricity, paved roads, and early education. These villages are not included in municipal or regional planning and are subject to home demolitions and forced displacement.

Despite these conditions, the resilience and cultural heritage of the Arab Bedouin remain. NCF documents these realities, advocates before Israeli and international bodies, and supports local leadership, especially of women and youth. We argue that sustainable development must be based on equity and inclusion. It must address historical marginalization and be based on community participation and recognition of the status of indigenous people.

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the necessity of science- and evidence-driven strategies. In line with this objective, we present substantial data illustrating the systemic exclusion of the Bedouin community across critical indicators, including life expectancy, access to early childhood education, maternal health outcomes, and digital connectivity. To achieve meaningful equity, it is imperative to implement targeted and inclusive investments that are informed by direct consultation with Bedouin communities.

#### Recommendations:

- Official recognition of all unrecognized villages and inclusion in state planning.
- Investment in culturally sensitive, participatory development, particularly in healthcare, education, and infrastructure.
- Protection from forced displacement and equal enforcement of land rights.
- Formal inclusion of Arab-Bedouin representatives in national and local policy development related to sustainable development.

On the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, we urge all Member States to embody the principle of leaving no one behind. Inclusion is not an add-on to sustainable development—it is its foundation.