



## **The Higher Follow-Up Committee Begins its Preparations for the Fourth Human Capacity Conference "Benefits of Sustainable Development"**



Ramallah and Haifa, December 12th 2019: In the presence and participation of the Director General of the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Raja Khalidi, and Chair of the Higher Follow-Up Committee of Arab Masses in Israel, Mohammed Barakeh, the Committee held a preparatory meeting at the Mossawa Foundation in Haifa for the 2020 Fourth Human Capital Conference. The Conference will focus on the topic of “sustainable economic and social development in the Arab community” with a focus on the role therein of local authorities, central government, and civil society institutions.

The meeting was attended by members of the conference’s steering committee and heads of local authorities and civil society institutions. The conference project director, Dr. Rafiq al-Haj presented an outline



of the conference's objectives, format and substantive focus. The conference will aim to present ideas, suggestions, and success stories to motivate institutions active in the Arab community, especially local authorities, to frame their strategies in the context of the globally adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in order to advance Arab society to higher levels in harmony with international trends and objectives.

In regard to economic development, the conference will address a number of issues. These include establishing industrial zones, establishing local authority companies for economic investment, and cooperating with various development centers, employment offices, and rehabilitation institutes. The conference will also address the need for local economic development plans separately or as part of a regional Arab economic strategy, improving and changing land use patterns, expanding the sphere of action in the economic domain of the local authority, and enacting laws that help entrepreneurs, as well as establishing and supporting economic frameworks such as chambers of commerce.



For a social development strategy that encompasses individuals and communities, the conference will address strengthening Arab social capital, enhancing national and community affiliation, accepting others, and encouraging and supporting local frameworks in various aspects of life, primarily youth organizations. It will also examine how to ensure that municipal administration is carried out with transparency and integrity, with an aim of seeking out public participation, as well as encouraging the establishment of neighborhood committees to strengthen local governance.

The conference working groups will conduct a preliminary economic survey of the sustainable development situation of Arab countries, and presenting its results at the conference. The survey will investigate the existence of industrial zones and economic companies, as well as collect information on spheres of influence, land uses (agricultural, residential, or economic), and the date of approval of the last structural map. The survey will also investigate other information that reflects indicators of achieving sustainable development, such as population statistics, adjusted income per capita, population density, number of rooms adjusted for family size, number of high school graduates (according to specializations; scientific, literary, computer, industrial, etc.), and **number of holders of higher education degrees**. The conference will target groups of Arab civil and political society in Israel; such as professionals, social activists, representatives of local authorities, public sector workers, businessmen, investors, and youth groups, in addition to the Higher Follow-Up Committee members, the National Committee of Arab Local Authorities, and other institutional representatives.

The conference is scheduled to be held in June 2020 for two consecutive days, with MAS providing technical and scientific support for these efforts, in the framework of a partnership project



with the Higher Follow-Up Committee, under the theme “Mobilizing Palestinian Human Capital for Development”.