
STRATEGY

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Almost a third of all adults globally are excluded from the financial system, many of whom are poor. Solving this problem could change the face of development.

To drive progress in areas where opportunity is ripe and advances can improve millions of lives, the UNSGSA has developed a set of three strategic priorities that guide her work:

- **Usage and Development Impact**
- **Policies for Digital Financial Inclusion**
- **Underserved Populations**

To implement these three priorities, the UNSGSA promotes customer-centric approaches and increased engagement with the private sector.

USAGE AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Ensuring that diverse financial services are used and have a positive impact on people's lives.

[The importance of financial inclusion is highlighted in seven of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.](#) These include reducing poverty and hunger, improving health and education, and achieving economic and gender equality.

Related:

[Customer-centricity: At the Heart of Financial Inclusion and the Core of the Digital Economy](#)

[Wow! A Human-Centered Success Story](#)

[Driving the New Development Agenda: What is the role of financial inclusion?](#)

Increasingly, research and experience are demonstrating the development impact of financial inclusion. In Kenya, for example, access to mobile money helped lift nearly one in 10 families out of extreme poverty. The UNSGSA supports the generation and dissemination of such evidence so that policymakers and businesses recognize the powerful impact of extending financial services to all.

The issues of usage and development impact are closely interconnected. Access to formal financial services has grown tremendously since 2011. Unfortunately, the percentage of people using these services has stagnated for traditional financial services and for mobile money. "Without usage we will have zero impact", the UNSGSA has said. To address this, she promotes policies and innovations that increase usage, such as customer-centric approaches to drafting policies or designing services.

POLICIES FOR DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Making policies and public goods work for technology-enabled financial inclusion.

Related:

[In Nigeria, New Horizons for Digital Financial Inclusion](#)

[For Indonesia, Technology Holds a Key to Financial Inclusion](#)

[Inclusive Technology for an Inclusive Future](#)

For those without access to traditional banking services, innovations such as mobile money, e-commerce platforms, and fintech innovations are expanding access and use of financial services on a massive scale. Innovative, low-cost digital financial solutions allow previously unbanked people to save money, make payments, or receive loans at the touch of a button. Globally, more than half (FYI: 2018 Findex (52.3%) sent or received over last year) of adults have sent or received digital payments, a jump of ten percentage points in just three years.

In her global advocacy, the UNSGSA promotes dialogue between fintech companies, regulators and standard-setting bodies, and the dissemination of emerging good regulatory approaches to foster innovation while mitigating its risks for the financial system and customers. In her country advocacy, she promotes a level playing field and regulatory frameworks where banks, mobile network operators, and fintech can all contribute to fostering inclusion.

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Encouraging policies and practices adapted to difficult-to-reach segments

Despite gains in bringing financial services to more people worldwide, several populations remain largely underserved. The Special Advocate is focusing on how to speed progress among these three groups:

Related:

[How Can Data Propel Financial Inclusion for Women?](#)
[Breaking Ground in Financing Women Entrepreneurs](#)

Women. In developing countries, 41 percent of women are excluded from the formal financial system (FYI: 65% of all women have an account, 59% in dev countries or 41% without accounts in dev countries) and a gender gap of 9 percentage points has persisted between men and women since 2011. In addition, women in low- and middle-income countries are 10 percent less likely to own a mobile phone than men, making it more difficult for them to access digital financial services. To eliminate the gender gap, the UNSGSA promotes a better understanding of women's financial needs by policy makers, and she emphasizes the business case for serving women.

Related:

[Cultivating Solutions for Farmers](#)
[For Indonesia, Technology Holds a Key to Financial Inclusion](#)
[How Can We Further Unleash the Powers of Financial Inclusion?](#)

Smallholder Farmers. Formal financial institutions and value chain actors meet less than a sixth of the \$200 billion financing needs of 500 million smallholder farmers. Digital finance offers many opportunities to reach farmers, but only if it is tailored specifically to their needs and the infrastructure is in place to allow it to flourish.

The UNSGSA acts as a convener to encourage new partnerships that can offer new solutions for farmers using value chain actors and innovative distribution channels.

Related:

[In Nigeria, New Horizons for Digital Financial Inclusion](#)

[How Can We Help Small Business Thrive?](#)

Small Businesses. In developing countries, small- and medium-sized enterprises account for half of total employment and a third of GDP. But due to inequities in credit and financing, these businesses often struggle to grow. Women-owned small businesses have a particularly hard time. The UNSGSA advocates innovative policies and technology solutions that can unleash credit and other services for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), for example by leveraging digital data and value chains. Her CEO Partnership for Financial Inclusion also promotes new ways to finance MSMEs through partnerships between global financial and non-financial companies.