Queen Máxima has long called for more and comparable data to better understand who has access and who does not, and which financial service innovations and policies are having the greatest impact on poor people, enterprises and national priorities.

New and reliable data is shedding more light on the state of financial inclusion. 2.5 billion adults around the world are excluded from the financial system, a stunning figure recently confirmed by the World Bank’s new Global Findex survey. As policy makers and the private sector recognize the need for specialized data, tools like the G20 Basic Set of Financial Inclusion Indicators provide a practical way for countries to assess their status for individual and SME finance, to know more about unbanked markets and client needs, and to measure progress against nationally determined targets.

A growing number of countries have developed in-depth national surveys that are galvanizing investment and expansion of services, better informing policy makers, and complementing globally comparative data sources. In her visits from South Africa to Malaysia, the UNSGSA has had the opportunity to welcome and discuss details of groundbreaking approaches to measuring local supply and demand, and monitor progress. For example, in Brazil, the UNSGSA joined a workshop with government officials, the Central Bank, academic experts, and think tanks to discuss emerging research and statistics on how financial services affects social welfare, and resulting policy targets.

Over the years Queen Máxima has collaborated with global institutions to encourage harmonization and streamlining of data collection so as to reduce the burden on reporting countries while improving quality, and making comparison and analysis more meaningful. She encouraged the formation and joined the launch of the annual IMF Financial Access Survey (FAS), which now covers supply of services in 185 countries. In another effort, Queen Máxima brought together the Chair of the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics with G20 members to discuss opportunities to strengthen and harmonize central bank approaches to financial inclusion data.