H.M. Queen Máxima of the Netherlands will visit Bangladesh from Monday 16 to Wednesday 18 November in her role as the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance at the invitation of the Bangladeshi government.

This will be Queen Máxima’s first country visit in her capacity as Special Advocate since the new Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at the UN in September. Access to financial services has been incorporated into a number of these goals as an important tool for reducing poverty, boosting economic development, and improving gender equality.

Bangladesh has considerable experience with microfinance and it plays a leadership role in particular with digital finance. The Special Advocate will begin her visit on Monday by meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, followed by conversations with several donor organisations in Dhaka about their role in inclusive finance. She will discuss expanding financial services with representatives of microfinance organisations and will explore mobile financial services with bank and mobile service providers.

The next day the Special Advocate will visit several locations outside Dhaka to explore the experience and needs of low-income finance customers, including employees at a garment factory who are paid digitally, a small businesswoman, and both clients and staff of agent banking and mobile money operations. Later she will meet with the governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Atiur Rahman, leaders of mobile money organizations, and will attend a meeting concerning the country’s digital financial inclusion strategy.

On Wednesday 18 November Queen Máxima will meet the President of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid; the Minister of State for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak; and the Minister of Finance, Abul Maal A. Muhith.

Queen Máxima was appointed UNSGSA in 2009. In this capacity she advises on access to financial services, which she is committed to achieving for everyone worldwide, with a special focus on boosting the development of low-income groups and the small business sector. She has been honorary patron of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion since 2011.

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