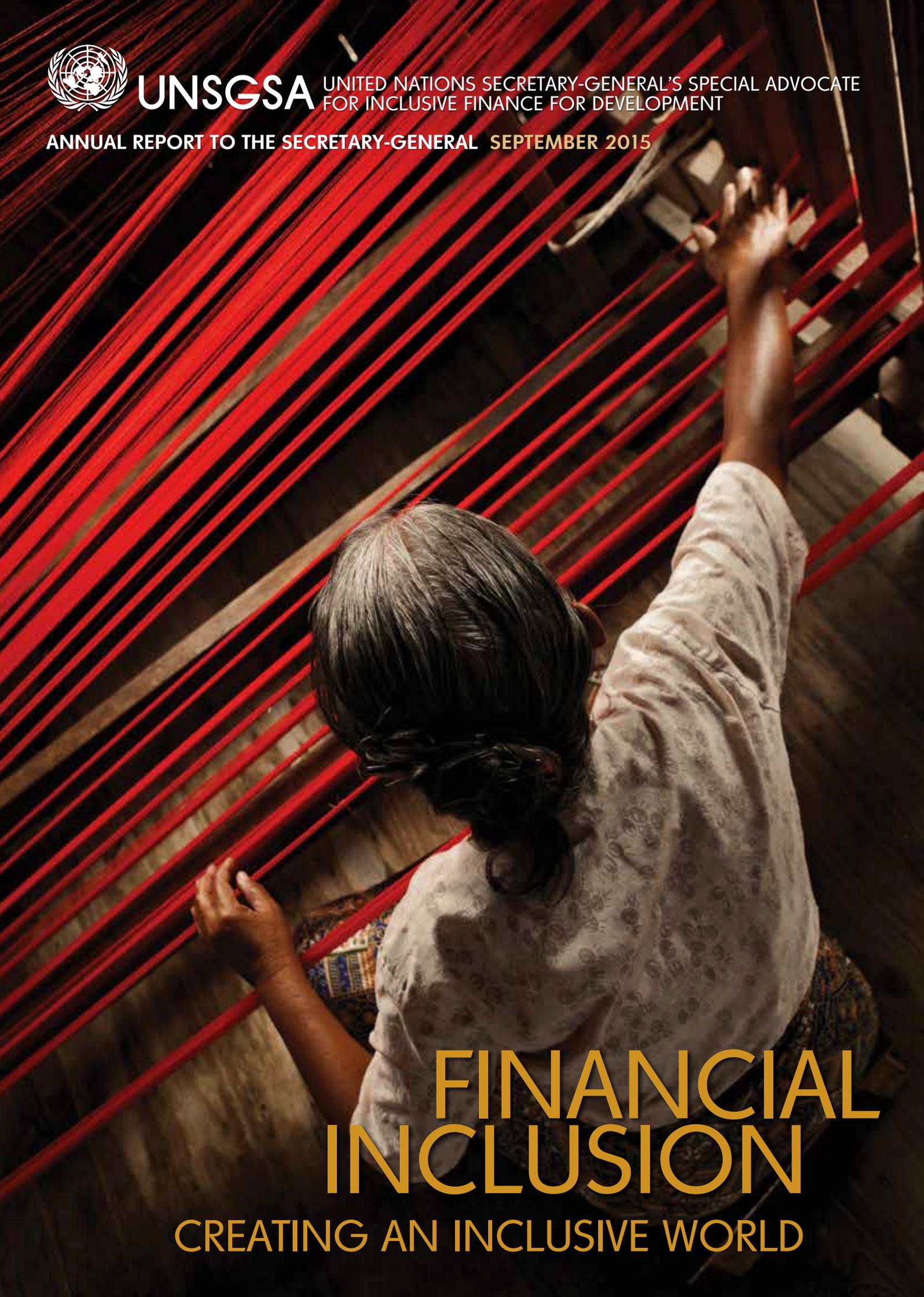




UNSGSA

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL ADVOCATE
FOR INCLUSIVE FINANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SEPTEMBER 2015



FINANCIAL INCLUSION

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORLD



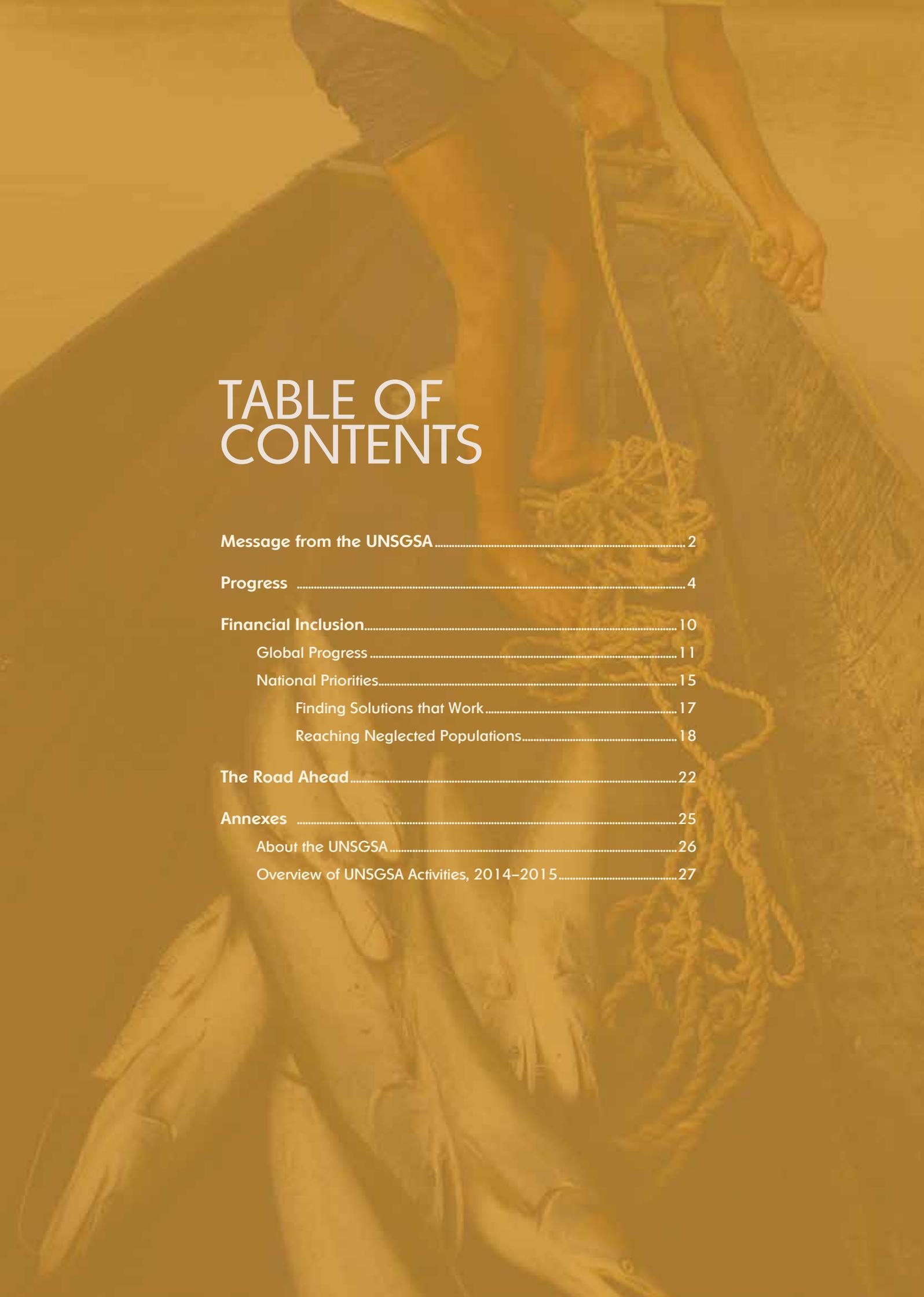
A photograph of a person's legs and feet on a boat deck, with a rope net visible. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The person is wearing shorts and is barefoot. The rope net is coiled on the deck.

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MESSAGE FROM THE UNSGSA

This has been a landmark year for the financial inclusion movement—a year in which we have learned that work begun a decade ago is paying off on a global scale.

Close to three-quarters of a billion people have gained access to financial services since 2011. This remarkable statistic, from an extraordinary new data set called the Global Findex, testifies to the unflinching efforts of visionary individuals and organizations working to provide the poor and the marginalized with the financial tools they need to overcome hardship and improve their lives.

I offer congratulations and my deepest gratitude to those who have contributed to this progress. I hope we can gain inspiration from our success because the critical work ahead will not be easy. Two billion people remain outside the formal financial system and significant disparities persist: between women and men, young and old, rural and urban populations, and across geographic regions.

This year I saw these challenges—as well as the impact of progress—up close across Asia. Financial inclusion is not an end itself—it's a means to an end, a powerful tool that can enable people like Zhou Guozhi, a tomato farmer I met in rural China, to achieve their dreams. Thanks to her entrepreneurial spirit and careful investments, supported by her first-

ever loan from a microfinance institution, she has transformed a nascent greenhouse operation into a thriving business. She now employs 13 villagers, her husband works for her, and she's placed her family on stable financial footing.

Zhou Guozhi is a woman of low income living in a rural area, a triple challenge when it comes to financial inclusion. But increasingly success stories like hers are unfolding around the world.

So how do we capitalize on this progress? The next round of global data on financial inclusion will be released in 2018 and it offers us a challenge: How much can be accomplished before then?

A number of promising directions are apparent, many of them digital. I am not alone in believing that mobile money holds an important key. Already, mobile banking is reaching poor and remote communities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where still only 12 percent of adults have mobile money accounts.

Digitizing government and private-sector payments also presents an excellent opportunity to expand financial inclusion. If national governments continue to move social welfare payments and salaries from cash to electronic means, another 160 million people can be added to the ranks of the financially included. Likewise, if businesses pay wages electronically into

accounts, another 280 million can be brought into the formal system.

I'm confident digital tools will allow us to ignite significant progress, opening a broader path to the goal of universal access to basic accounts by 2020. But access is just an interim step. The full benefit of financial inclusion depends on households and small businesses actively using a range of affordable and effective financial services, coupled with financial education and consumer protection. That is a much taller order.

In the coming year the global community will begin to address the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be adopted at the UN in September. Financial inclusion is not a goal itself but an essential piece of infrastructure laying the ground for the SDGs, and it will play a significant role in achieving many of the SDGs, including poverty eradication, job creation, gender equality, and food security. In order to pave the way for development progress and to lock it in, financial inclusion needs to be widely in place.

This year we have learned that universal, full financial inclusion is not just an aspiration. It remains a challenge, but it is a challenge we know we can meet. At a time when rising inequality dominates public discourse, it is important to recognize that we have in our hands a set of tools that can expand



Zhou Guozhi is a woman of low income living in a rural area, a triple challenge when it comes to financial inclusion. Thanks to her hard work and with the support of catalytic financial tools, she has built a thriving greenhouse operation. Increasingly success stories like hers are unfolding around the world.

opportunity for those living at the base of the economic pyramid.

Above all, we must keep in mind that financial inclusion is about human development and empowerment; about giving people the means to improve their own lives. Throughout the coming year I look forward to working closely with a community of dedicated local, national, and international partners to break down the barriers for those who remain outside the financial system. A more inclusive future is starting to unfold.

H.M. Queen Máxima of the Netherlands
UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate
for Inclusive Finance for Development



PROGRESS

The financial inclusion movement is entering a new stage in significant ways. Notable advances in commitments, action, and innovation continue to drive momentum strongly.

But this year, progress can be calculated by a new metric. Seven hundred million people have gained access to financial services in the last three years, a remarkable statistic derived from a groundbreaking new data set.

If knowledge is power, the deep and detailed information provided by the World Bank's Global Findex database—which documents how people in 143 countries save, borrow, make payments, and manage risk—will strengthen the work of advocates, policymakers, and businesses.

Importantly, this second iteration of the Findex database provides comparable indicators over time, allowing us to see what has worked and what hasn't. It promises to galvanize progress further by making it possible for countries to compare their data with that of their peers and analyze where the most promising avenues of action may lie. Thanks to the Findex as well as other data sources such as the International Monetary Fund's Financial Access Surveys and FinMark Trust's FinScope country surveys, an increasingly nuanced picture of financial inclusion has emerged.

Even beyond the impressive country-level progress the Findex data documents, the project itself represents an exceptional advance for the field of financial inclusion. (A brief history appears on page 14.) A critical tool that will inform decision-making well into the future, this is a stellar example of comprehensive data collection on a global scale in the service of human development—a public good in every sense.

Country progress

Countless insights into financial behavior can be derived from this new data but one result stands above all: in only three years, financial inclusion has made great progress worldwide, rising 20 percent—a strong endorsement of the efforts of global and national leaders and organizations.

Promising directions are apparent, particularly in

digital services. In sub-Saharan Africa, the world's leader in mobile money, 12 percent of adults are using mobile finance—almost a third of all account holders—compared with the global average of just two percent. The pace of growth here holds great promise. ATMs have also broadened their reach in developing countries, although agent banking has not taken off widely. Some countries have expanded financial inclusion by digitizing payments of their government transfers, particularly in Latin America.

Still, significant disparities remain: between women and men; young and old; rural and urban; and geographic regions. Although there has been some solid improvement overall, the gap between women and men is stubbornly stuck at seven percentage points; in developing countries the gap is still nine points. Rural residents and the very poor remain excluded from formal financial systems at particularly high levels.

A number of countries are making great advances with financial inclusion. An initial World Bank analysis suggests that there is a significant link between an increase in account ownership and a country's commitment to developing a financial inclusion strategy. Indeed countries that made commitments since 2011 have seen an increase 3.5 percentage points higher than countries that did not—out of an average overall rise of 9.7 points. While the Findex reflects the impact of actions already taken, future



Global leaders spoke out strongly in support of financial inclusion this year, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (with Queen Máxima at a World Bank event on financial inclusion), and U.S. President Barack Obama, who cited the “enormous human potential” of financial inclusion, “particularly when it is provided equally to women,” in a meeting at the White House with Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima during their official visit in June 2015.

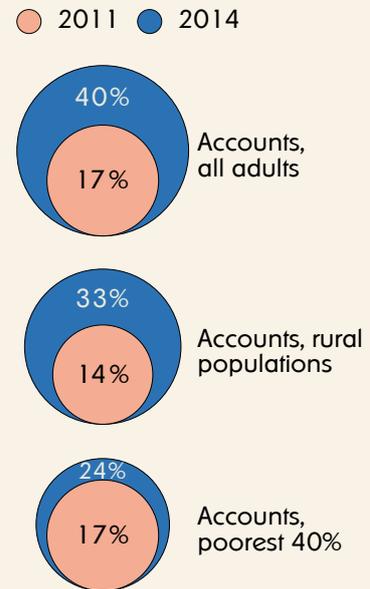
Financial Inclusion, Tanzania Style

The path to progress in financial inclusion follows different routes in different countries. In India, Peru, Kenya, and around the world, governments are pulling different levers to reach a similar goal: the universal provision of financial services.

In Tanzania, account penetration doubled between 2011 and 2014, rising to 40 percent. How did a country where more than three-quarters of the population depends on subsistence agriculture achieve these gains?

The answer lies mainly in Tanzania's dynamic mobile money arena and in government policies supporting its growth and innovation. Multiple mobile money providers compete on price and service, and interoperability facilitates user transactions between different providers. The government has encouraged collaboration between banks, mobile network operators, and mobile money providers, and has invested in rural infrastructure and relaxed customer identification requirements.

Rising Account Ownership in Tanzania



Source: Global Findex database, World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/globalfindex>

progress will be driven by countries that are now in the process of creating plans and strategies.

The past year has been exceptionally active in this regard. Paraguay's national strategy was launched in December 2014; China's banking regulatory commission is actively developing a plan; Myanmar launched a roadmap in March 2015; Pakistan introduced a strategy in May, followed by the Philippines and Peru in July.

Progress has been particularly notable in India, where an initiative to end financial exclusion by offering a bank account to all Indians led to 125 million new accounts being opened by early 2015. While this bold program is still in the early stages, the government is using these accounts to disburse social welfare payments and provide other services to its neediest citizens.

Digital innovations

The digital revolution is increasingly delivering on its promise in the realm of financial access. This past year the number of active mobile money customers

rose more than 40 percent, to 100 million. While mobile penetration varies widely by region, the industry is increasingly focusing on the developing world, driven by the affordability of mobile phones and services and the size of the unserved population. Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, registered a 50 percent increase in mobile financial services in 2014, the highest growth rate in the world.

E-commerce and data-centric solutions are also showing great promise. China recently granted permission to several companies to introduce private online banks. Taking advantage of existing digital payments platforms and the widespread use of mobile devices—which can provide insights into customers' payment habits and creditworthiness and thereby inform loan decisions—these online banks are designed to offer modest loans, deposits, and payments aimed primarily at small and micro-enterprises. This digital model offers promising solutions for small businesses that have limited access to finance as well as to households.

Mobile technology in emergency settings is vital

for providing information and resources to affected populations—and for delivering payments when local infrastructure has broken down, as we learned during the Ebola epidemic. In order to remunerate front-line Ebola response workers, UNDP and other aid organizations paid salaries electronically into mobile money accounts and bank accounts, thereby providing fast, reliable, and secure payments to people who were risking their lives at a time of crisis.

Commitment and action

The momentum behind public and private partnerships took a strong and very public turn this year when more than a dozen high-level government leaders and CEOs announced a landmark set of commitments to extend financial services to excluded populations—including targets of one billion new customers from the World Bank, 500 million each from MasterCard and Visa, and millions more from organizations working in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, India, and Indonesia. Presented at a flagship event during the World Bank's Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C., these pledges aim to put financial tools in the hands of more than half of the two billion who are now excluded, with an ultimate goal of universal financial access by 2020.

For commitments to take concrete form in a way that can improve the lives of the poor, policy bodies at the country and global level have decisive roles to play. During the past year the international financial standard setting bodies (SSBs)—the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, Committee on Payments and Market Infrastructures, Financial Action Task Force, International Association of Deposit Insurers, International Association of Insurance Supervisors, and International Organization of Securities Commissions—took firm positions in support of inclusive financial services.

During a closed-door meeting with the Special Advocate and on numerous other occasions, the SSBs discussed the challenges and opportunities resulting from the emergence of mobile financial services, and the problems faced by countries with limited capacity to apply standards in a proportionate manner (notwithstanding the SSBs' increasing efforts



“We cannot end hunger and increase smallholder productivity and incomes without financial inclusion,” the Special Advocate said in an October 2014 event in Rome to mark World Food Day. She addressed the opening session along with FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva and others.

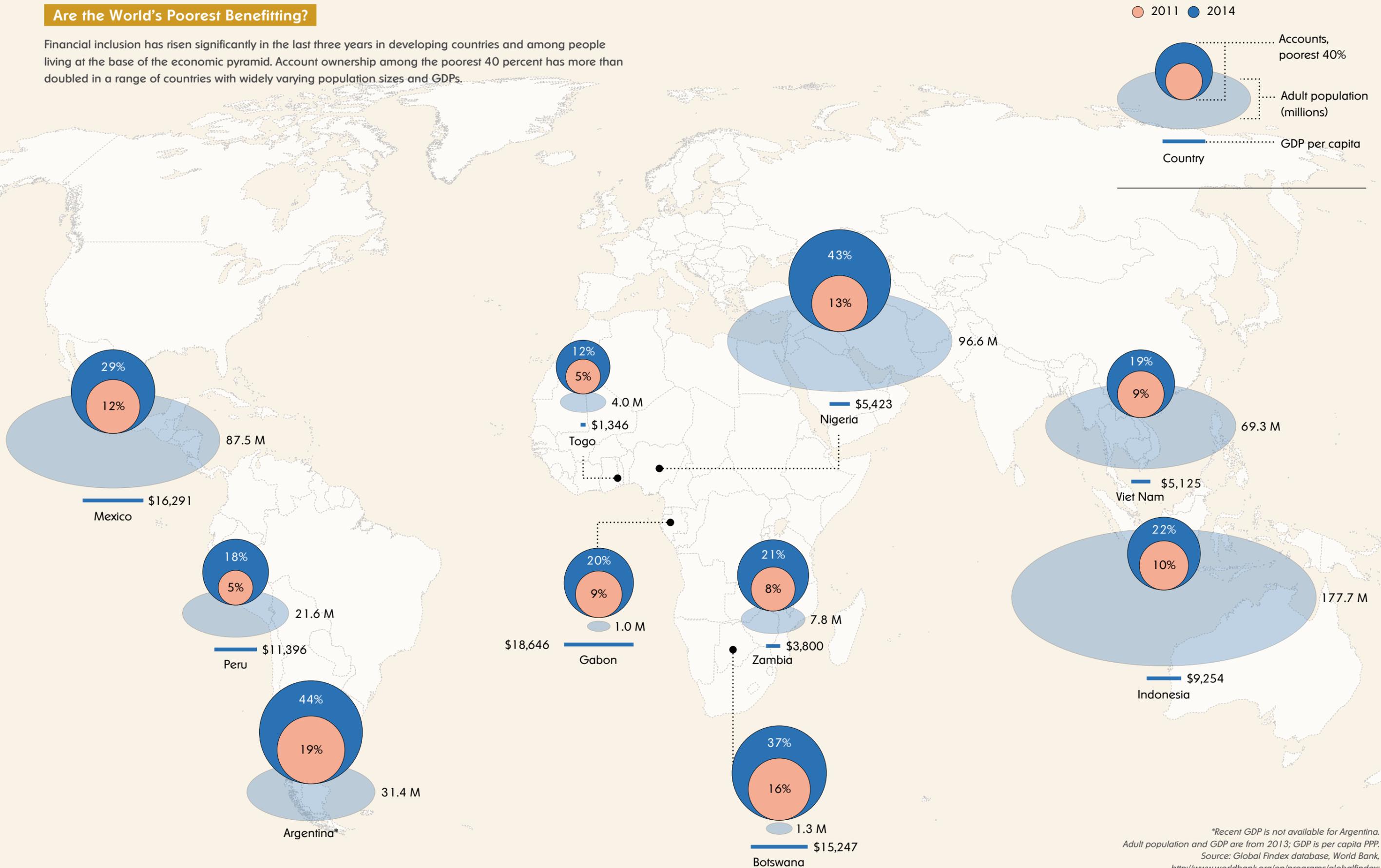
to provide guidance). They also addressed steps, especially on the part of the Financial Action Task Force, to emphasize a case-by-case, risk-based approach, and to minimize the adverse impact of the wholesale application of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing rules, which can inadvertently undermine financial inclusion and broader development goals. The SSBs increasingly recognize that these issues call for their collective engagement.

The active support of global organizations such as the SSBs, the World Bank, the UN, and the G20 is critical for extending financial inclusion. The World Bank's goal of universal financial access by 2020—announced by President Jim Kim and the UNSGSA, Queen Máxima, in October 2013—moved into high gear, driven by an action-oriented focus on 25 priority countries where 73 percent of the world's financially excluded live.

At the UN, intergovernmental discussions surrounding the new Sustainable Development Goals—to be adopted in September 2015—have included a broad recognition of the importance of financial inclusion for achieving these goals. This was further emphasized in the Secretary-General's synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda and negotiations on the related financing for development track, thus helping to build additional momentum behind the complex process of expanding financial services for the poor.

Are the World's Poorest Benefitting?

Financial inclusion has risen significantly in the last three years in developing countries and among people living at the base of the economic pyramid. Account ownership among the poorest 40 percent has more than doubled in a range of countries with widely varying population sizes and GDPs.



*Recent GDP is not available for Argentina. Adult population and GDP are from 2013; GDP is per capita PPP. Source: Global Findex database, World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/globalfindex>; World Bank Development Research Group.



FINANCIAL INCLUSION

As the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA) for the past six years, H.M. Queen Máxima of the Netherlands leads a global advocacy effort to advance financial inclusion for the economically marginalized. The movement, supported by the work of the UNSGSA, is building great momentum, fueled this past year by growing involvement among regulators, country leaders, and businesses, and supported by the release of an extraordinary set of data demonstrating the vigorous progress that has already been made.

This past year, the Special Advocate focused on both global and national action—extending the boundaries of awareness and support, shoring up commitment and collaboration, and exploring innovative solutions to complex challenges.

In dedicated country visits to China, Myanmar, and the Philippines; in speeches to students, policymakers, the private sector, and financial experts; in dozens of meetings with country leaders, business heads, and low-income clients; and in consultations with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the UN, she worked to break down barriers for those currently outside the financial system and to build a more inclusive future.

GLOBAL PROGRESS

As financial inclusion rises on the international Agenda, the UNSGSA encourages broader commitment and greater progress. This past year she advanced financial inclusion with international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, the G20, and the World Economic Forum; with global business concerns; and with international policymakers. She pressed for concrete commitments in support of country priorities, encouraged a clear role for financial inclusion in development plans, and championed regulatory and policy innovations.

As the UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate, Queen Máxima has been an influential voice in discussions leading up to the adoption of the UN's new global development agenda in September 2015, and the related track on financing for development, which will guide global development priorities, policies, funding, and action through 2030.

The new development agenda, with the Sustainable Development Goals at its core, will succeed the Millennium Development Goals, which were established in 2000 and have been widely recognized for mobilizing global action against poverty and disease. The goals now will address unfinished and far-reaching concerns, including poverty reduction, hunger and malnutrition, women's empowerment, and inequality.

Together with her partners in and outside the UN, the UNSGSA worked throughout the year to ensure that financial inclusion is reflected as a powerful enabler of the new development goals—not as an end itself but as a necessary foundation for their implementation. In this regard she collaborated closely with the Group of Friends of Financial Inclusion—an informal association of member states chaired by Indonesia, Peru, and Tanzania, which has taken the lead on behalf of financial inclusion at the UN.



Women like Daw Cho Cho Khaing (left), a snack vendor in Hmawbi Township, north of Yangon in Myanmar, account for 40% of the world's workforce and own a third of formal small businesses. But in developing countries women are nine percentage points behind men when it comes to financial inclusion.



The momentum behind public and private partnerships took a strong turn this year when leaders made a landmark set of commitments to extend financial services to excluded populations. Those commitments were announced at the World Bank's Spring Meetings, where UNSGSA Queen Máxima, World Bank President Jim Kim (left), and MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga (right) were joined by a broad coalition of partners.

Laying out concrete commitments

Because financial inclusion lays necessary groundwork for development progress, the Special Advocate has often emphasized that universal financial inclusion needs to be in place long before the 2030 end date of the new agenda. In 2013, she and World Bank President Jim Kim called for a concerted global effort to accelerate the process, with the first step being universal access to basic transaction or mobile money accounts by 2020.

Less than two years later, at the World Bank's April 2015 Spring Meetings, Queen Máxima and President Kim were joined by a broad coalition of public and private partners to announce an ambitious set of commitments to provide universal financial access within the next five years.

The World Bank event brought together leaders of the financial inclusion movement along with prominent figures from business, government, and other sectors, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who spoke out passionately about the importance of extending financial services to poor households and small businesses and about forming the public-private partnerships necessary for success.

The groundwork for these unprecedented commitments had been laid earlier in the year during the World Economic Forum at Davos. There,

Queen Máxima, President Kim, and MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga convened high-level policy leaders and CEOs with the goal of identifying solutions to spur progress. Expressing concern that sustainable economic growth and financial stability will remain elusive as long as so many remain outside the financial system, the group began to build momentum for real commitments through deeper collaboration between government and business—something the UNSGSA has advocated consistently.

Flexible regulation

To build support for policies that can further promote financial inclusion, particularly among the poor, the Special Advocate continued to work closely this year with high-level regulators of the global financial standard setting bodies.

"We have come a long way since our first joint meeting [in 2011]," she said in Basel in October 2014 at the third gathering of the heads of major global regulators to address financial inclusion. With the issue now mainstreamed in their agendas and regulators adopting a unified perspective on its importance, the impact of her advocacy is taking hold.

The global regulators have made great strides in adopting more flexible approaches—including the risk-based application of rules aimed at money laundering and terrorist financing—but the right balance between increased access, consumer

Financial Inclusion Bears Fruit in the Philippines

About 90 minutes outside Manila in the Philippines, a financial inclusion success story has taken root on a lush three-hectare pineapple farm.

With Melissa and Manuel Garcia at the helm and with the support of a local financial services provider, this small operation has grown over a six-year period into a thriving business that has allowed the Garcia family to quadruple their income, purchase a home, send their four children to school—all at the same time—invest in delivery vehicles, provide employment to 12 neighbors, and plan for the future.

The Garcias' story began 20 years ago when Melissa and Manuel were working on a local pineapple farm for below minimum wage. When a friend offered to lease them land to start their own farm they jumped at the opportunity.

But where could two experienced farmers with no banking history and no collateral obtain the initial capital they needed? As it turned out, their first loan—low interest, flexible payment terms—came from CARD SME Bank, which specializes in providing a range of financial services and trainings to small business owners.

Now, Melissa and Manuel are regular savers, they have taken out six loans with a repayment rate of 100 percent, and they are expanding their operations. Melissa says she can't imagine they would have gotten their initial loan from another institution and perhaps she's right. But despite the challenges they face, including accessing larger markets, the Garcias' success suggests a tremendous opportunity for providers, even as it demonstrates the power of financial inclusion to change lives.



Thanks to their own hard work and with the support of a local financial services provider, Melissa and Manuel Garcia have built an increasingly successful pineapple farm that has allowed the couple to quadruple their income, send their kids to school, and purchase a home.

protection, and fraud prevention is a delicate one. With some international banks pulling out of the remittance business, (see discussion of migrants, pg. 20), the Special Advocate warned: “A move to exit

markets in order to reduce these risks could result in greater financial exclusion.”

How to Build a Database

Making the Global Findex Happen

Well before the term “financial inclusion” entered the lexicon—back in 2005, when microcredit was the only word in town—groundwork began to be laid for a comprehensive data initiative that could guide efforts to provide financial services to the poor.

Relatively little was known then about the landscape of financial access. In 2005 during the International Year of Microcredit, some members of its advisory board—including Queen (then Princess) Máxima and others who have remained involved in financial inclusion—argued that there was no knowledge of the scope of the problem, let alone thorough data to outline the challenges. “From the very beginning she was a key driver on the data question,” remembered Peer Stein of the World Bank, a member of the UNSGSA Reference Group.

As the conversation about microcredit broadened into a larger discussion of financial inclusion, the need to develop better data grew more urgent. At one point, said Stein, “we realized there wasn’t enough data to go around,” and wide agreement coalesced around the necessity of getting the data right.

But prospects for the much-needed data weren’t solidified until 2010 when the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded the World Bank to conduct three rounds of what became the Global Findex. The first survey, published in 2012, provided a crucial baseline of data on consumer use of financial services at country level, measuring indicators such as bank account use, payment behavior, savings, credit, and insurance decisions.

This year the second edition of the Findex data was released, providing invaluable insights into what is working, where more attention is needed—and realizing the promise of detailed, comparable data envisioned by Queen Máxima and others more than a decade ago.



Queen Máxima has long called for detailed data collection to inform work on financial inclusion, a campaign that led to the Global Findex database and its attendant publication, *The Little Data Book on Financial Inclusion*.

Regulators are also confronting a changing landscape of new players and new ideas. “Evolving business models that leverage technological innovations, telecoms infrastructures, and non-traditional and, until now, unregulated players present the challenge of ensuring that regulation and supervision keep up with these developments

without inadvertently thwarting innovations that can bring large numbers of unbanked households and businesses into the formal financial system,” she said in Basel.

Financial education and consumer protection

While new technologies bring significant opportunities, “they also create different risks for customers that need to be better understood and better monitored,” the Special Advocate said to students of the National School of Development at Peking University, during her country visit to China in November 2014. Throughout the year, she stressed the imperative of consumer protection and financial education as vital complements to financial inclusion.

Financial education among young people remained a priority, building on steps taken in 2014 when the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) introduced a financial literacy module to its international student assessment. The UNSGSA also emphasized financial education for small business owners, whose success can “unlock jobs and growth, two elements so desperately lacking in many of our economies,” she said in a message to an OECD symposium on financial literacy.

Data for development

Good data undergirds all efforts to expand financial access, and from the beginning of her appointment as UNSGSA Queen Máxima has been a strong proponent of its paramount value. This year, one of her most significant advocacy goals was reached when results from the second round of Global Findex data was released by the World Bank, revealing that global financial access has expanded 20 percent in just three years.

“Among those of us passionate about advancing access to financial services for the poor, this landmark new edition of the Global Findex provides data that allows us to see what is working, what isn’t, and how we can focus our efforts most effectively to reach the goal of universal financial inclusion,” she said on the release of the new findings in April.

The Special Advocate also suggested a renewed focus on another area of research. “This is financial inclusion *for development*,” she noted at the World Bank Spring Meetings. “It’s not an end of itself. . . . We need to make the links to development outcomes: How does this relate to empowerment, food security,

better health?” In particular, data is urgently needed to guide efforts to provide women with financial services that can address their needs and their life situations.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Financial inclusion is largely led by the developing and emerging countries that have embraced financial access as an important strategy for improving the lives of their own people. Global organizations provide valuable support and resources, but the concrete work that makes financial inclusion a reality takes place within country borders.

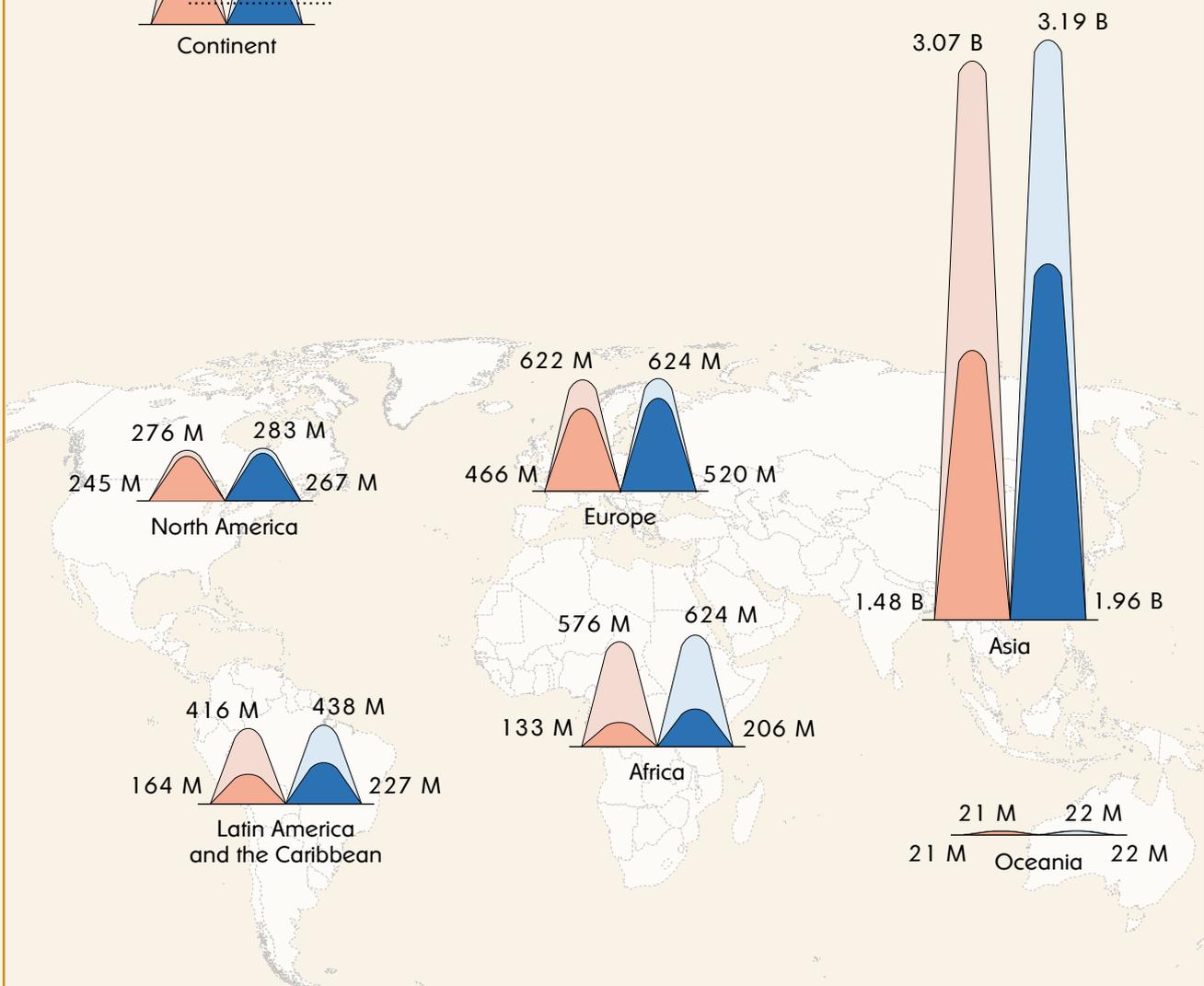
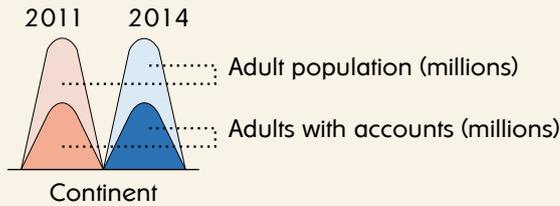
In dedicated visits to China, Myanmar, and the Philippines, and in countless conversations with public and private leaders around the world, the Special Advocate addressed the broad range of issues that countries confront as they press forward with financial inclusion. Throughout the year she highlighted two goals in particular: finding solutions that can have the widest impact and reaching neglected populations, particularly women.



The Special Advocate discussed financial inclusion with Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People’s Bank of China, during her visit to China in November 2014 (above) and again during the World Bank Spring Meetings in April 2015.

Asia's Impact

More than half the people in the world—54 percent or 4.3 billion—live in Asia. So, too, do more than 60 percent of the financially excluded. Given the continent's massive population, even a small percentage rise in financial access can change millions of lives. With dynamic growth and strong government interest in financial inclusion driving progress, Asia stands on the edge of major change, as the UNSGSA saw first-hand this year in trips to China, Myanmar, and the Philippines.



Adult population is from 2010 and 2013.
 Source: Global Findex database, World Bank,
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/globalfindex>;
 World Bank Development Research Group.



During a country visit to China, the Special Advocate explored the potential of online financial services to expand financial inclusion with Alibaba founder and chair Jack Ma at Alibaba's headquarters in Hangzhou, November 2014.

Finding Solutions that Work

It is widely recognized in the realm of financial inclusion that every context is different. For progress to take place, and for it to stick, every country needs to figure out what works best on its own home ground. Nonetheless, some approaches are showing broad potential.

Digital innovation

The Special Advocate reflected a growing consensus about the promise of mobile finance when she remarked at the Mobile World Congress in March 2015, “The mobile industry holds the key to achieving the dream of universal financial inclusion.” Particularly in developing countries where the use of technology is growing but banking infrastructure is limited, mobile banking can offer basic financial services to poor and remote communities at greater convenience and lower cost than traditional banks.

The Special Advocate highlighted the potential of mobile financial services to provide a shortcut to financial access. In Myanmar she noted, “[many] countries have relied on traditional infrastructure such as physical banks. But Myanmar may have a unique opportunity to skip this costly and difficult step by using mobile phones to provide financial services.”

Mobile access is expanding quickly, with the number of registered accounts reaching 300 million in 2014. But further growth depends on the right policy and regulatory environments—both in regard to consumers and providers—an issue the Special Advocate highlighted throughout the year.

Digital finance extends far beyond mobile money, of course. Increasingly, online financial services offered by Internet-based providers have drawn interest. In China, the Special Advocate explored this unfolding landscape in discussions with major players such as Alibaba, Tencent, and China Mobile. “The potential growth of online financial services, targeting especially the excluded and productive segments of society, is enormous,” she noted in Beijing.

China’s embrace of technology-based finance could be particularly promising for small businesses, which often have limited access to traditional banking. As partnerships emerge between mobile operators, banks, and Internet-based companies, the newly blurred lines between what were once distinct businesses point to a broader path to financial access for enterprises.



The Special Advocate applauded the launch of the Philippines' financial inclusion strategy along with Armando M. Tetangco (right), Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and Albert Ferreros del Rosario (left), Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in Manila, July 2015.

“The importance of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to growth and employment can hardly be overstated,” the Special Advocate said at the OECD global policy research symposium. “These make up the majority of enterprises in the world. They provide jobs and contribute significantly to national incomes. They therefore play a central role in sustainable, inclusive economic growth and development.”

National strategies

“Those countries that have established supportive and competitive environments, policies that encourage innovation, and national financial inclusion strategies are making great strides,” the Special Advocate noted when the Global Findex data was released.

One of her priorities as the UNSGSA is to support national governments as they undertake the rigorous process of developing plans and strategies. This past year she delivered a video message for the launch of Paraguay’s national strategy; engaged with Chinese officials about developing an overarching policy and regulatory framework for financial inclusion; and attended the launches of Myanmar’s new financial inclusion roadmap and

the Philippines’ national strategy. As always, she maintained regular contact with a host of partners in many other countries, sharing resources and providing insights gleaned from her experiences and conversations.

Reaching Neglected Populations

By its very nature, financial inclusion is dedicated to neglected populations. Within the massive community of two billion people without financial access, however, certain groups experience greater levels of exclusion. Ignored, overlooked, or deliberately shunned for a variety of reasons, these populations present a special challenge to advocates, policymakers, and providers.

Women

While the overall number of both men and women with access to financial services jumped sharply over the last three years, during the same period literally no progress was made on closing the gender gap. In developing countries, women remain nine percentage points less likely than men to have access to basic financial services. They make up 40 percent of the world’s workforce, 43 percent of agricultural labor, and they own a third

The New Face of Entrepreneurs

Farmers? Women?

Whatever happened to the MBAs?

In rural areas around the world, the definition of entrepreneur is being rewritten. Zhou Guozhi is a cautious, hardworking farmer who grows greenhouse tomatoes in rural Hebei province outside Beijing. But she is also a confident businesswoman who has built a successful operation by analyzing opportunities, taking educated risks, and making canny investments.

For a number of years Zhou Guozhi raised livestock for a living, but fluctuating prices and other risks encouraged her to switch to cultivating tomatoes. She started slowly with just one greenhouse. When her first crop was a success she sold all her livestock and invested the money back into her new business, setting up 13 greenhouses within a few years.

But she realized that her greenhouses were not adequately insulated against the winter cold. To protect her crops and improve production, she turned to the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and took out a loan, her first ever, which she used to purchase an insulating cover.

Today, her operation is thriving. Her success is spilling over to her family (including her husband, who now works for *her*) and her community (she employs 13 local villagers). A driving entrepreneur if ever there was one, Zhou Guozhi demonstrates how financial tools in the hands of a hardworking farmer can transform a family, a business, and a community.



Zhou Guozhi's entrepreneurial spirit and careful investments, supported by her first-ever loan, have helped her transform a nascent greenhouse operation into a thriving enterprise.

of formal small businesses. But progress has been limited in removing barriers to their legal rights to sign contracts, open bank accounts, and own property.

“Gender equality lies at the heart of development progress,” the Special Advocate said in a video message for the Alibaba Conference on Women’s Entrepreneurship in Beijing. “We know that women deliver the highest return for social and development investment.” Empowering

women to control their own money is a complex process with a powerful social dimension that resists straightforward solutions. Regulators and policymakers can make a difference by reshaping rules that exclude women, and service providers can look closely at financial education, targeted marketing, and product design.

“If we can help expand the economic opportunities available to women at all income levels—through financial inclusion, through digital technology, using

all the levers available to us,” she predicted, “I am confident that women’s full empowerment will follow close behind.”

Rural communities

Three-quarters of the world’s poor live in rural areas and most of them work in agriculture. Geographic isolation, inadequate infrastructure such as electricity, and severely limited income combine to perpetuate the exclusion of rural populations from financial services, healthcare, education, and much more.

Because food production takes place overwhelmingly in rural areas, much is at stake. If we hope to feed our rapidly growing population, the Special Advocate stressed in Rome on World Food Day, rural residents and farmers must gain access to the range of support and services they need. “We cannot end hunger and increase smallholder productivity and incomes without [financial inclusion].”

Smallholder farmers face steep challenges in keeping operations afloat without access to affordable financial services, particularly savings, insurance, and credit. Rural finance remains a significant challenge in many areas, an issue Queen Máxima addressed in conversations with the UN’s Rome-based food and agriculture agencies and in multiple country visits.

Migrants and remittances

For migrants who leave home looking for better opportunities, the safe and affordable financial tools needed to stabilize their lives and help their families at home are often out of reach, on both the sending and receiving ends. This past year the urgent needs of these populations gained wide attention around the globe.

More than 240 million people live outside their countries of birth, and last year migrants sent an estimated \$440 billion in remittances back home to developing countries, a sum that surpassed foreign direct investment and represented inflows four times greater than official development assistance. But the high average cost of remittances takes a sizeable bite out of their value—and their development



For migrants, the safe and affordable financial tools needed to stabilize their lives and help their families back at home are often out of reach. In a speech at the International Day of Family Remittances in Milan in June 2015, Queen Máxima highlighted the urgency of reducing the cost of remittances.

impact. “Reducing these costs from the current average of eight percent to three percent would translate into huge savings of over \$20 billion annually for migrants and their relatives,” the Special Advocate said in Milan at the International Day of Family Remittances.

The ability of migrants to send funds back home safely and affordably was set back recently as providers began to withdraw from the remittance business in response to regulations aimed at preventing money laundering and terrorism financing.

In speeches and conversations throughout the year, Queen Máxima reinforced calls for a risk-based approach on the part of regulators, as encouraged by the Financial Action Task Force, striking a balance between the needs of migrant families and concerns related to financial crimes. “Given the size of remittance flows, whatever progress we make will have an outsized benefit,” she said in Milan. “We need to get this right.”

Activities in the Netherlands

Queen Máxima continued to be involved this year in a broad variety of activities to strengthen financial education, entrepreneurship, and access to finance in the Netherlands.

Her work on financial education—which focuses particularly on children and young adults—includes appearances as honorary chair of the Money Wise Platform. In that role, among others, she visited an organization that helps families avoid debt; spoke at the Money Wise annual conference; and launched the Dutch Money Week.

On a European level, she initiated a high-level discussion on advancing financial literacy on the European agenda with EU commissioners Frans Timmermans, Jonathan Hill, and Tibor Navracscs, and other stakeholders including the Netherlands' finance minister, Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

Closely connected to financial inclusion and financial literacy is the subject of building entrepreneurship. As a member of the Dutch Committee for Entrepreneurship and Finance, Queen Máxima advises on improving access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises.

She also addresses the broader subject of



Queen Máxima spoke on financial literacy in the Netherlands in October 2014 at the annual Money Wise Platform conference in Rotterdam. She stressed the importance of handling money wisely, referring to a poster about the risks of keeping savings at home that she received during a visit to India as UNSGSA.

advancing entrepreneurship, for example by encouraging the training and coaching of young and new entrepreneurs. This past year, she visited several innovative companies and projects and paid a working visit to Qredits, a Dutch microfinance institution.



As UNSGSA and honorary chair of the Dutch Money Wise Platform, Queen Máxima participated in a working dinner in Brussels in March 2015 on financial education in Europe.



THE ROAD AHEAD

Over the past few years, the financial inclusion movement has made extraordinary progress. Seven hundred million people have gained access to the financial tools they need to pull themselves out of poverty and fulfill their economic potential. But two billion people are still locked outside the financial system, a number that demands concerted action. The next iteration of global demand-side financial inclusion data will be released in 2018 and it offers a challenge: how much can be accomplished in the next few years? The Secretary-General's Special Advocate will focus her own work in the coming period on finding solutions that can advance financial inclusion widely, sustainably, and responsibly.

Global development

The power of financial inclusion to undergird progress on urgent development goals has been widely recognized during the UN's discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, and rightly so. The UNSGSA will continue to work closely with UN member states after the Sustainable Development Goals are adopted, and as the means of monitoring and implementing the new agenda take center stage in the years to come. To strengthen the advocacy case, she will encourage building a broader research base to demonstrate the links between financial inclusion and development outcomes.

With the aim of ensuring that financial inclusion remains a priority of the G20, Queen Máxima will continue to work with the G20's Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII) as its honorary patron during the remainder of Turkey's G20 presidency and as China takes the mantle in 2016. She will also maintain her engagement with the international financial regulatory bodies, with a focus on adapting to technological innovations and on the complex issue of bank de-risking, which threatens remittances and other financial services for migrants and low-income people.

National momentum

The Special Advocate has long recognized the importance of country ownership for making lasting progress on financial inclusion. She and her partners will maintain their focus on a group of 25 key nations that together account for 76 percent of financially excluded populations. Strong leadership and hard work have already begun to change the landscape of financial access in many of these countries, and the future holds great promise. In support of this process and as a centerpiece of her effort to advance financial inclusion country by country, the Special Advocate will undertake new and repeated country visits in the coming year.

For national governments, moving wages as well as social and welfare payments to beneficiaries from cash to electronic means could have a huge impact on financial inclusion. The Special Advocate will encourage this shift and will emphasize the benefits

of developing national unique digital IDs, which can allow undocumented people to enter the financial mainstream.

Focusing on what people need

Digital tools can offer a key to financial inclusion, particularly via mobile money but also through electronic government payments, e-commerce, and online banking—including the use of customer data to expand tailored services to those who would not otherwise qualify. Because mobile phones remain the nexus of digital finance, the Special Advocate will explore approaches to making mobile handsets and eventually smart phones more widely affordable, for example by addressing the taxation of handsets and SIM cards.

Emerging digital financial tools must be developed with a strong commitment to customer protection and financial education. She will stress the importance of both education and protection, and on building the approaches necessary to reach and protect multiple populations, including students, small businesspeople, and adults of varying literacy and numeracy levels.

Small businesses are a crucial pathway out of poverty and provide 95 percent of jobs in low-income countries, but the financial services they need to support growth and job creation is often severely limited—particularly in low-income countries, where 44 percent of small businesses are financially excluded. Expanding access to small businesses is high on the agenda of the G20's GPII. This coming year, as in the past, the Special Advocate will emphasize the importance of addressing this stumbling block.

Queen Máxima has long emphasized the importance of providing financial services to women and rural residents, including farmers—populations that remain widely excluded. Redoubling efforts to reach women will require broad economic empowerment efforts along with the development of financial products specifically tailored to their needs. This is equally the case for smallholder farmers, a population she will continue



The Special Advocate often emphasizes the concept of “leapfrogging,” whereby countries like Myanmar and others, which have limited traditional infrastructure such as physical banks, can jump far ahead by using mobile phones to provide financial services. One focus for the UNSGSA this year will be on exploring approaches, together with public and private partners, to making mobile phones more affordable.

to emphasize together with the UN food and agriculture agencies and other partners.

In countries recovering from natural disasters or conflict—when homes and businesses are lost and infrastructure is destroyed—access to financial services can make the difference between life and death. Rolling out the right kinds of financial tools to affected populations should be part of any response and recovery effort, as the Special Advocate has emphasized. In the coming year the outcome of an analysis encouraged by the UNSGSA will be released for the use of policymakers and development organizations, outlining how financial services—including post-crisis payments, savings and credit for rebuilding, and insurance to mitigate future risks—can be utilized most effectively in post-crisis situations.

Financial inclusion is the work of a global community and its progress depends on global cooperation. A broad consensus has taken shape that barriers to financial access must be dismantled in order to address inequalities of income and opportunity. The next steps are complex but the goal is pressing. By providing affordable, effective, and genuinely useful financial tools that the poor can use to protect themselves against hardship, invest in their futures, and build the lives they want, financial inclusion can contribute powerfully to addressing inequality and creating a sustainable world that works for all.



ANNEXES

ABOUT THE UNSGSA

Designated in 2009 by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as his Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA), Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands is a leading global voice on the importance of financial inclusion for achieving development and economic goals. Her central message is that financial inclusion enables and accelerates progress toward numerous national priorities such as poverty alleviation, job creation, food security, gender equality, and equitable growth.

As UNSGSA, she works in partnership with stakeholders globally to raise awareness, encourage leadership, and foster action toward financial inclusion. She draws on her first-hand experiences gained through country visits and conversations with low-income families, small business owners, policymakers, and others to identify which financial services and policies can really make a difference for lives, livelihoods, and whole communities. She regularly consults with and convenes stakeholders from diverse sectors—linking government leaders, technical finance authorities, mobile phone companies, agriculture experts, venture capitalists, development partners, and others—helping people and institutions learn from each other and form new collaborations. As honorary patron of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion since 2011, she works with governments, implementing organizations, and partners to advance the G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan. Within the UN system, the UNSGSA engages the breadth of programs, funds, and agencies to share insights and best practices about how financial inclusion complements and advances their missions. She actively champions inclusive finance in discussions leading to a new global development agenda to take effect in 2015.

Advisory and administrative arrangements

The UNSGSA's work is done in partnership and with wide consultation among the many stakeholders working to advance financial inclusion—and those affected by it. She collaborates closely with an advisory Reference Group of leading international organizations in financial inclusion to share expertise and suggest strategic opportunities that she can advance through advocacy and partnerships. Reference Group members include:

Alliance for Financial Inclusion*	Omidyar Network
Better Than Cash Alliance*	UN Capital Development Fund
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	UN Development Programme
Consultative Group to Assist the Poor*	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
International Finance Corporation*	The World Bank*
International Monetary Fund	<i>*Implementing partners of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion</i>

Members of the Reference Group and many other in-country and global partners play an important role in converting advocacy into action. The UNSGSA also consults widely with UN country teams, financial standard setting bodies, private financial institutions, companies, donors, and civil society organizations. A small staff works closely with the UNSGSA and her secretariat in The Hague to coordinate and advance her UN and G20 activities. The office of the UNSGSA is housed at UNDP at the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy in New York and receives generous financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Financial inclusion in the Netherlands

Queen Máxima champions access to finance, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy and education, including for children and youth, in the Netherlands. In doing so she conveys best practices and insights from Dutch and international experiences. She is a member of the Dutch Committee for Entrepreneurship and Finance and honorary chair of the Money Wise Platform, a national partnership that promotes financial literacy.

More information

UNSGSA: www.unsgsa.org

G20 GPFI: www.gpfi.org

Royal House of the Netherlands: www.koninklijkhuis.nl

OVERVIEW OF UNSGSA ACTIVITIES 2014–2015

Speech to the G20's Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion Forum, prerecorded video
Perth, Australia, 1 September 2014

"Today, there is much more understanding of the essential role of financial inclusion for individual well-being, for building resilience, and for accelerating economic growth and job creation. And many more policymakers recognize that financial inclusion, financial stability, and financial integrity are not just compatible but mutually reinforcing."

Speech to MONEYVAL, the Council of Europe's anti-money laundering and terrorism financing body
Strasbourg, France, 17 September 2014

"Financial inclusion, the promotion of financial integrity, and the prevention of criminal cash flows go hand in hand. That is, provided that we strike the right balance between security measures and accessibility of formal financial services."

Meetings, United Nations

New York City, USA, 22–24 September 2014

During the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly, the Special Advocate met with heads of state, other government leaders, and senior leaders from the UN and civil society organizations.

"A Shared Understanding: Finding the Right Balance between Financial Inclusion and Global Financial Standards in a Time of Change."

Remarks to the 3rd SSB Meeting on Financial Inclusion (co-chair)

Basel, Switzerland, 2 October 2014

"With the advances in technology and innovation, we will need to be able to stay one step ahead of potential risks through knowledge sharing, joint learning, and nimble adaptation."

"In the Struggle to End Hunger, Empowering Family Farmers through Financial Inclusion."

Keynote address at the opening of World Food Day, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization
Rome, Italy, 16 October 2014

"Financial inclusion is a necessary component for delivering any ambitious new goal that may be set to end hunger."



The Special Advocate met with the UN member states involved with the Group of Friends of Financial Inclusion in June, including co-chairs (left to right) Ambassador Meza Cuadra of Peru, Minister Plenipotentiary Maura Mwingira of Tanzania, and Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia.



Queen Máxima as the Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development presented her 2014 Annual Report to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UN, September 2014.

“Financial inclusion, the promotion of financial integrity, and the prevention of criminal cash flows go hand in hand,” the Special Advocate said in September 2014 to Council of Europe experts on anti-money laundering and terrorism financing—“provided we strike the right balance between security measures and accessibility of financial services.”

Interview on the role of insurance for extending financial inclusion, prerecorded video
21st annual International Association of Insurance Supervisors conference
Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 23 October 2014

“Inclusive insurance means giving the possibility to every man and woman to protect themselves against unforeseen risks, against external shocks—health, drought—so they can carry on their lives.”

CHINA country visit, 24 – 28 November 2014

The Special Advocate discussed the path of financial inclusion in China with the Governor of the Central Bank and the Chair of the Banking Regulatory Commission; microfinance institutions; private-sector leaders, including from China Union Pay and Tencent; representatives of banking interests; and students and faculty at Peking University, where she delivered a speech. She also spoke with microfinance clients in Hebei Province outside of Beijing, and traveled to Hangzhou to visit the Alibaba Group.

“From ‘Flying Money’ to Digital Finance: Innovation and Development through Financial Inclusion in China.”
Speech to the National School of Development, Peking University
Beijing, China, 26 November 2014

“The development of a balanced society with equitable growth is impossible without financially included and economically empowered people.”

“Progress Driven by a Common Vision.”

Remarks on the launch of Paraguay’s national financial inclusion strategy, prerecorded video
Asunción, Paraguay, 2 December 2014

“Paraguay’s example offers an inspiring lesson for the world on how quickly progress can happen when the political will is strong and partners share a common vision.”



Meeting with students and faculty—including Dean Yao Yang (left) and Dean Emeritus Lin Yifu (right)—at Peking University’s School of Development in November, the Special Advocate noted: “We are working towards the same goal: equitable economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation and empowerment, and opportunities for individuals and communities.”

“Where Do We Go from Here? Moving Forward with Financial Inclusion.”

Speech at Financial Inclusion: The Next Move Forward conference
London, UK, 19 January 2015

“The next move forward in financial inclusion will be driven by innovation, led by the private sector in partnership with many other stakeholders.”

Meetings, World Economic Forum

Davos, Switzerland, 22–23 January 2015

Queen Máxima co-hosted a private dialog with public- and private-sector leaders on ways to achieve universal financial access by 2020. She participated in sessions promoting global financial inclusion and advancing inclusion to achieve global food security, a working dinner on access to healthcare, and held separate meetings with business leaders, heads of international organizations, and government figures from Brazil, Colombia, India, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Viet Nam.

“The Transformative Promise of Mobile Technology for Financial Inclusion.”

Speech at the GSMA Mobile World Congress Summit
Barcelona, Spain, 2 March 2015

“Financial inclusion is a means to bring people out of poverty permanently. Thanks to the success of mobile technology, we can now do so for everyone—no one left behind.”

MYANMAR country visit, 30 March – 1 April 2015

The UNSGSA met with President Thein Sein, ministers of economic development and finance, the Governor of the Central Bank, Parliament member Aung San Suu Kyi, and attended the launch of Myanmar’s financial inclusion roadmap. She discussed financial inclusion with leaders of microfinance institutions, banks, mobile network operators, development partners, and funders, and delivered a speech at the University of Yangon and the Yangon Institute of Economics, before visiting with clients in Hmawbi Township.

“Leaping Far Ahead: Unleashing Myanmar’s Potential Through Financial Inclusion.”

Speech to students at the University of Yangon and the Yangon Institute of Economics
Yangon, Myanmar, 31 March 2015

“I’ve found that countries make progress with financial inclusion when they develop their own approaches. Even in this early stage, the contours of financial inclusion Myanmar-style are beginning to emerge, shaped by the promise of mobile and other digital technologies.”



How can a low-income microentrepreneur like Lilybeth Bayona—who recently re-opened the sari-sari (convenience) store her grandmother ran in the rural Philippines—obtain the capital she needs to set up shop and keep her shelves stocked? Bayona (center), who discussed her business with Queen Máxima through an interpreter (left), turned to a mobile-phone-based, microfinance savings bank, BPI Globe BanKO, which offers value chain financing. This model, which uses a mobile interface, allows sari-sari owners to purchase inventory using credits that are applied directly to the orders they place with distributors.

Foreword, *The Little Data Book on Financial Inclusion 2015*
(Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, April 2015)

“The main message embedded in the new Global Findex is tremendously encouraging. In a short time, financial inclusion has made great progress worldwide. The hard work being done around the world is making a difference.”

World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings
Washington, DC, USA, 17 April 2015

The UNSGSA met with finance and government leaders from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the USA.

Co-host and panelist, Universal Financial Access 2020: Toward the Last Mile flagship event, World Bank Group/International Monetary Spring Meetings
Washington, D.C., USA, 17 April 2015

“This is financial inclusion for development—it’s a means to an end, not an end of itself. . . . We need to make the links to development outcomes. How does this relate to more empowerment, more food security, how does it relate to better health?”

“Harnessing Financial Education to Spur Entrepreneurship and Innovation.”

Address to the 3rd OECD/GFLEC Global Policy Research Symposium to Advance Financial Literacy, prerecorded video
Paris, France, 7 May 2015

“By improving the financial literacy of business owners through financial education, we unlock jobs and growth, two elements so desperately lacking in many of our economies.”

“The Critical Importance of Women’s Empowerment for the Global Future.”

Address to the Alibaba Conference on Women’s Entrepreneurship, prerecorded video,
Hangzhou, China, 20 May 2015

“If we can give women the necessary financial tools, their drive and determination will benefit not only themselves but their families and communities as well.”

“Making the Case for Financial Inclusion in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.”

Speech at the 3rd meeting of the Group of Friends of Financial Inclusion, United Nations
New York City, USA, 4 June 2015

“I am especially pleased that financial inclusion has continued to be recognized as a central piece of the Post-2015 and Financing for Development tracks.”

“At the Forefront of Sustainable Development: Investing in People.”

Address for the 40th anniversary of Oikocredit International, prerecorded video
Berlin, Germany, 11 June 2015

“Forty years ago, providing financial services to low-income earners was not considered a viable investment strategy. But the founders of Oikocredit proved otherwise by creating an ethical investment vehicle with a mandate to empower people living in low-income communities.”

“The Development Impact of Remittances: Building Hope and Opportunities for Migrant Families.”

Keynote speech at the first International Day of Family Remittances, organized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development
Milan, Italy, 16 June 2015

“The key question with remittances is: how can we maximize their development impact? How can the great efforts being made by migrant workers have the highest impact possible?”

PHILIPPINES country visit, June 30–July 1, 2015

The UNSGSA met with President Benigno Aquino III and discussed financial inclusion with the Governor of the Central Bank, the Secretary of Finance, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, other legislators, and the private sector. She spoke at the launch of the country’s financial inclusion strategy. In a trip to Cavite province outside Manila she met with farmers and others to see first-hand how financial services are improving lives.

“Paving a Wider Path to Financial Inclusion in the Philippines.”

Speech at the launch of the Philippines’ National Strategy for Financial Inclusion
Manila, the Philippines, 1 July 2015

“The Philippines is ready to start its journey towards a more financially inclusive and cash-light economy, building on the country’s mobile and digital innovations. This path could yield real social, economic, and developmental benefits to all of its citizens.”



In Dongxintun, China, Wang Yan (on Queen Máxima’s right) was able to open a successful restaurant serving her homemade noodles with the support of the local women’s federation and the village committee, which wanted to make Dongxintun into more of a tourist destination and helped her get a loan to expand the areas’s attractions.



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At a time when rising inequality dominates public discourse, it is important to recognize that we have in our hands a set of tools that can expand opportunity for those living at the base of the economic pyramid.

—H.M. Queen Máxima of the Netherlands
United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for
Inclusive Finance for Development

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSIVE FINANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

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