

## SDC 2018 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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### **Title: Bridging the Financial Inclusion Gender Gap in Smallholder Agriculture and Nigeria: An Untapped Potential for Sustainable Development**



The sustainable development progress of Nigeria is being challenged by a persistent large financial inclusion gender gap. The gender gap in smallholder agriculture also frustrates the multifunctional potentials of the agricultural sector in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The smallholders drive the agricultural sector, comprise majority of the worlds' poor and are found in all regions in Nigeria. This study reviewed relevant literature sources (The World bank Global Findex Databases 2011, 2014, 2017 and the Nigeria CGAP Smallholder Household Survey 2016 amongst others) to investigate what had been the trend and status of the financial inclusion gender gap in Nigeria and smallholder agriculture. The causes and effects of financial Inclusion gender gap on sustainable development were also identified by this study and the opportunities to bridge the gap in Nigeria. Our study found that the financial inclusion gender gap in smallholder agriculture was 12% in 2016, while considering the whole population, it increased from 7% in 2011 to 20% in 2014 and 24% in 2017. Though the causes of financial inclusion gender gap could be ascribed to socioeconomic, cultural, unfavorable legal environment, demand and supply side constraints in using formal financial services, they had serious negative effects on sustainable development. This paper argued that bridging the financial inclusion gender gap in smallholder agriculture especially through digital financial inclusion and development of innovative rural finance products would not only be a giant step towards closing the financial inclusion gender gap in Nigeria and SDG 5. But it would also re-position the country in achieving other SDGs. Progress made by the country to meet the targets of financial inclusion, agricultural growth, gender equality and other SDGs would translate to African continent's advancement and also fast track the global realization of the SDGs by 2030 given Nigeria's high population