Ensuring enabling and supportive environments was an important priority direction of MIPAA towards which UN Member countries over the last twenty years have taken various steps for implementing it. Different countries based on their demographic reality, available resources and government as well as civil society initiatives adopted certain practices related to enabling environments inclusive of use of digital technologies, making spaces age and disability friendly by using appropriate devices and supporting gender as well as intergenerational considerations. Some countries in the Asia Pacific Region made better progress in addressing needs of older people related to housing and living environments, paid more attention to developing care and support mechanisms for older people and their care givers and in the process dealt with reducing abuse, neglect and violence against older persons along with improving images of ageing. While in this century almost all countries are going through rapid pace of population ageing, some at a greater speed than others, but many are facing varied challenges in adapting to emerging digitalization in societies, transformations required in living environments due to climate changes and various global disasters having health, social and economic impacts. Yet at the same time many opportunities have also developed over the years which have created conducive responses towards population ageing. Globally as well as regionally there is a lot for countries to learn from each other in implementing the 3rd priority direction of MIPAA, namely ensuring enabling and supportive environments by building and developing services and practices which improve quality of life of ageing populations.

The objective of holding this online webinar on ‘Enabling environment for future: Focus on Digital inclusion and Built environments’ as a side event is to share experiences which are meaningful for the region and learn to develop appropriate services, facilities and programs which allow countries to respond to emerging needs of older men and women across different cohorts as well as from various socioeconomic segments with diverse health requirements. This would provide a suitable platform as a side event to the intergovernmental meeting which will be reflecting on the achievements since adoption of MIPAA. It brings interdisciplinary perspectives on addressing present and future ageing needs of societies with special emphasis on digital inclusion and built environments. The Expert Speakers will address and share concerns related to how technology can help support memory, psychosocial aspects and different activities of daily living. By recognizing the limitations which certain older groups may have in terms of low literacy, access to technology, social media and information communication devices recommendation will be made for learning from overcoming the challenges and imparting successful practices. Similarly attention will be drawn to ways and means of reducing digital divide in societies especially in rural areas and in urban areas too where due to certain constraints of design, access and varied other reasons older women, those living alone often get left out in being beneficiaries of enabling environments but are gradually being included with efforts of certain special initiatives with participation of older people themselves. The focus of this meeting will also be to highlight efforts being made in certain countries to promote intergenerational programs by stressing on the need to pay attention on built, natural and virtual environments through adequate and appropriate planning and adopting processes with favourable outcomes. Finally this discussion meeting will highlight the needs of advanced age groups for whom supporting enabling environments is a challenge yet can be achieved by understanding the needs of super aged society where at present a few nations are but many more will be in the not so far future.

Through this side event an effort is being made to complement the MIPAA implementation of its 3rd priority direction of ensuring enabling and supporting environments by discussing perspectives, experiences, sharing practices and understanding the present challenges for moving forward with opportunities in the future. The support of Expert Speakers is much appreciated.