

“Thank you, Madame Chair and to the panel for your insightful presentations. My name is Sharon Fisher.

By 2050, 2.5 billion people or approximately 68% of the world’s population will be living in urban areas, and this could be as much as 90% in Asia & Africa. Youth have been moving to urban areas and will continue to do so in search of employment and a more fulfilling life.

During the same time frame the population 65 and over, will jump to 17% (1.6 Billion) with the “Oldest old” 80 & above expected to more than triple. The oldest old population in some Asian and Latin American countries is predicted to quadruple by 2050.

People are living longer, but that does not necessarily mean living healthier. Often, they no longer have support systems within family or community.

As we see the decline in health, mobility, an increase in intellectual disabilities and psychosocial disabilities. Are Disaster Risk Reduction and management plans keeping up with this shift in the population?

The Speaker referred to the Sendai toolbox that in theory is inclusive of all persons; but in practice during the Tsunami in Japan many of those who did not survive were older persons. The local community of Soroptimists were commended for being early support in community response both with immediate support and programs lasting several years such as funding girls to complete school after losing their parents.

We commend and support the speaker who mentioned community response. There must be a coordinated response at the community level.

Our question is “If people have to be evacuated or sheltered what has been included in planning? Is there a way to charge wheelchair batteries? Are there trained sign language interpreters? Are instructions written and posted at levels people can read and understand, with diagrams? Are there medical personnel available to manage psychotropic medications & other medical conditions? What plans for farm and domestic animals as many will not evacuate without them? Are there different plans for rural, urban and other human settlements?

Thank you very much for this opportunity.”