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UN disaster expert heads to international conference at Northumbria

A leading United Nations delegate will share her experience of preventing and responding to global disasters with leading experts at Northumbria University this month.

Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the UN's Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, will attend the combined Dealing with Disasters 2013 and 4th Conference of the International Society for Integrated Disaster Risk Management (IDRiM) which takes place at Northumbria.

From Opportunity to Action: Bridging the Gap between Disaster Reduction and Development through Science(s), Technology and People Centred Actions is a three-day conference that will address current crises and future risks.

Margareta Wahlström, one of the foremost experts in disaster reduction globally, will present at the opening session.

Conference delegates will examine opportunities for action in response to disaster from the perspectives of disaster science, technology, policy and practice. The event will include sessions that explore disaster management, sustainable development, reducing vulnerability, innovative technologies, logistics and disaster policy.

Professor Andrew Collins, Conference Co-Chair and Leader of the Disaster and Development Network (DDN) at Northumbria, said: “The science of disaster prevention and response and how this integrates with sustainable development aspirations is not only one of the most diverse fields to rise within academia in recent times but also one of the most acutely important from a human survivability viewpoint.

“This conference highlights the critical importance of accumulated research of the DDN and associated programmes and partners in facilitating impacts on crises. Whilst this year’s event has a particularly welcome contribution from science(s) and technological perspectives, change ultimately boils down to combinations of personal choices, rights and appropriate policies, which is why we flag ‘people centred actions’ in the main theme.”

Northumbria University’s Disaster and Development Network (DDN) has an international reputation for disaster management and sustainable development. The Network undertakes research, teaching and learning activities that encompass disaster reduction, sustainable development and resilience building.

Professor Collins added: “What emerges from the opportunities presented by disaster and development approaches is the importance of close inter-directional relationships between people involved in front-line disaster response and lay perspectives from everyday life together with a science and technology research capacity that can address the challenges faced.

“We need to ensure that research, best practice and policy influence each other so that new knowledge is accessible to all hoping to plan or coordinate appropriate responses to disaster risk.”

The conference will run from Wednesday 4 – Friday 6 September. Registrations have now closed for this event however, if anyone would like to attend, please contact Professor Andrew Collins at sz.dwdconf@northumbria.ac.uk.

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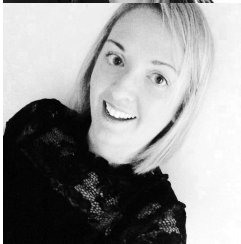


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