Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

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# Northumbria academics represent the UK at UN world conference

Experts from Northumbria are leading a UK delegation to the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Held in Sendai City, Japan, near the epicenter of the devastating earthquake and tsunami of 2011, the five-strong group has joined more than 8,000 delegates at the international conference. It has been organised to agree and publish a framework, which will be implemented globally by member states, to help build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

Maureen Fordham, Professor of Gender and Disaster Resilience, and Andrew Collins, Professor of Disaster and Development, from Northumbria's department of Geography, have been instrumental in the development of this framework through their research work as well as their involvement with their Gender and Disaster Network (GDN) and Disaster and Development Network (DDN).

The Networks are leading the way in integrating the fields of disaster management and sustainable development into global, national and local agendas. Both professors will take part in a number of events connected with the conference, which started on Saturday and will run until Wednesday (18 March).

Professor Fordham will be speaking at a public event organised by the Japan Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction and will also take part in a small networking lunch organised by BBC Media Action, The Netherlands Red Cross, Plan International, GNDR and UNISDR.

She will also attend a UK Cabinet Office dinner at the UK Embassy, in Tokyo.

Professor Collins itinerary includes presenting at a public forum on 'Protecting People's Health from Disaster Risks' and will chair an event on 'Emerging Trends on Disaster Risk Reduction'. He is also contributing to the outputs of two major consortia groups on 'Science and Technology' and 'Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)', as well as taking part in a number of formal and informal policy, practice and research meetings.

Professor Fordham said: "Andrew and I have both been heavily involved in the development of this framework and it's encouraging that we are finally at a stage where the document will be agreed and published.

"A lot of hard work has gone into this but there is still a lot of hard work to come as member states look to implement this policy."

Professor Collins added: "Whilst the logic of combining disaster and development issues together is as ancient as people experiencing disasters, it has taken much work over recent decades for the nations of the world to finally consolidate a common understanding of the approach

“The conference is going to be extremely informative and we are looking forward to seeing what is to come over the next few days.”

Joining the professors on the delegation is two of Northumbria’s Disaster Management and Sustainable Development postgraduate students, who are representing the ‘Youth Voice’ and the China links, and senior DDN Affiliates from Australia National University (ANU) and Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, USA.

For more information about courses in this Disaster and Development and related fields from Northumbria’s department of Geography go to www.northumbria.ac.uk/geography

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