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This lecture is a part of a seminar series that cover a broad range of perspectives on sustainability issues, particularly focusing on the need for a sound scientific basis for sustainable development policy.

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## Urban Land Use Efficiency in China: Implications for Sustainability

**Prof. Douglas Webster**

The School of Sustainability, Arizona State University, USA

**Thursday, January 17, 2008, 14.00–15.00**

Linné Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,  
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

Chinese city building processes will be examined from the perspective of sustainability implications of more efficient land use / accessibility systems. Findings are based on a recently completed major World Bank funded research on urban land use efficiency in China.

Urban land efficiency is particularly important in China because of the scale of urbanization (500 million new urban residents by mid-century), the fact that both human time and energy costs are rising rapidly, the opportunity presented by recently announced mass investment in urban public transit systems, and the national agricultural context - less than 14% of the country is arable.

China's cities continue to be built at high densities while yielding five times as much residential floor space per capita compared with 25 years ago – an obvious success. But there is considerable opportunity for improvement. Key issue areas to be addressed include: (i) variance in densities, (ii) improving peri-urban rural-urban land conversion processes, including agricultural impacts, (iii) better aligning rapid transit and land use systems to make such systems increasingly self-financing, (iv) improving in-fill processes, and (v) reducing overuse of industrial land.

**Douglas Webster** is Professor in the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University. His research focuses on Chinese and South-East Asian urbanization, particularly city building processes as they relate to sustainability. The author of many publications on East Asian urban regions, Dr. Webster was Senior Urban Policy Advisor to the Thai Government for 10 years. He acts as Advisor to the East Asian Sustainability Division of the World Bank on urbanization issues. He has held academic positions at the University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Asian Institute of Technology, Stanford, and Utrecht University. Webster is currently writing a book on China's Urban Future.

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