



## Research Seminar

# Re-visiting Limits to Growth

Prof. Bill Barron

Division of Environment, HKUST

Wednesday, 5 May 2010 (12:45 -14:00)  
Room 829, Knowles Building, HKU

**Abstract:** the world economy is based on a model of unending growth. Limits, whether on consumption, population size, or transformation of the natural world, are considered largely irrelevant (or at least highly elastic) so long as technological development continues. Yet in a number of respects, of which climate change is simply the most talked about, the current model appears unsustainable even to mid century. In short the limits are coming faster than normal rates of technological progress can be expected to push them back. Yet, even in the face of these looming resources constraints (on both sources and sinks) governments around the world are doing all they can to increase in consumption and “get the economy back on [the growth] tack”. This talk draws on *The Great Disconnect* by Bill Barron (2009) to outline a number of these issues and discusses options for managing the risks.

### About the Speaker:

Bill Barron received his PhD in environmental economics from The Johns Hopkins University. Before coming to Hong Kong in 1989 he worked on energy system assessments at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in the US and in Pakistan and Liberia. In 1989 he joined the Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management (CUPEM) of the University of Hong Kong to teach environmental economics and policy analysis. Since it's founding in 2000 he has also worked closely with Civic Exchange on environmental policy assessments. Since 2005 he has been with the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (Division of Environment). His principle research outputs while in Hong Kong include being lead author the text book *Fundamentals of Economics for Environmental Managers* (Quorum Books Westport Conn., 1998), and serving as lead author on *Financing Mass Transit Railways: an international survey* (2001), *Sustainable Transport in Hong Kong: directions and opportunities* (2002), *West Island Line/South Island Line: Direct External Benefits* (2004), and *Merging Hong Kong's Railways: the Public Policy Perspective* (2004). In 2009 he published *The Great Disconnect*, a book on challenges and possible responses to global environmental sustainability.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Please visit our website [www.hku.hk/cusup](http://www.hku.hk/cusup), click on 'Events' for Seminar Series.

Enquiries: 2859-2721

CENTRE OF URBAN STUDIES AND URBAN PLANNING  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

