

Urbanization pumping out pollution

By Cong Mu in Guiyang

China is undergoing urbanization at record speed, but critics ranging from Tony Blair to scholar Xu Kuangdi raised concerns over pollution, traffic congestion and energy consumption at a forum over the weekend.

Both Blair and Xu of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, speaking in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, encouraged the country to use more high technology in developing greener cities.

"We cannot expect countries like China and India, still with many millions living in poverty, to slow the pace of their development," Blair said. "Likewise, people of developed nations are not going to give up the ben-

efits of high living standards."

Xu said that since China is still in an early stage of industrialization, it is inevitable that the country will get "rich and dirty" before it becomes "rich and clean," and the critical stage is when the per capita income is between \$3,000 to \$8,000. Xu said, however, that technology could significantly lower the energy intensity during that stage.

Although China has overtaken Japan as the world's second largest economy, but its per capita income is still \$3,600 last year, compared with Japan's \$37,800.

As over 600 million people are now crowding China's cities, energy waste has hit critical levels.

Massimo Bagnasco, chairman of the Construction Working Group of European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, said at the forum that Chinese residences consume two to three times more energy than those in EU or North America due to poor technology and are less livable.

Wu Changhua, Greater China Director of the Climate Group, said that during the past 30 years of urbanization, much pollution resulted from the banks' investment into the dirty industries like manufacturing.

Now is the perfect time for the banks, Chinese and foreign governments and non-governmental organizations to work together on green technologies, Wu said.