

3.0 Canadian values and international priorities. Several participants underscored the strong connection between domestic institutions, such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, democratic practices, such as public consultation, and traditions of peace, order and good government, to explain Canadian activism in multilateral standard-setting and a willingness to develop and abide by international rules. However, there were some differences on the value-added by Canada's engagement in multilateral human rights forums, notably the United Nations. On one view, Canada excels at the multilateral dimension adding a critical and progressive voice on issues such as enhancing NGO access to UN structures, such as ECOSOC. Others took the view that the UN system is reaching the maximum level of tolerance of standard setting, and that the issue is now effective implementation. One participant cited the UN Human Rights Centre as an ineffective "culprit" in some country situations, notably Rwanda.

3.1 At least one participant remarked that the Government tends to emphasize "amnesty style" human rights, which focus on the security of the individual. More attention should be given to social and economic rights on the grounds that "human rights begin with breakfast" and that civil and political rights and basic human needs are complimentary not competing objectives. Education could be at the forefront of Canada's human rights policy, given its key role in women's development and as the basis for citizens to demand civil freedoms and democratic rights. However, since economic and social rights have a relatively weak juridical status, other participants called for greater investments in developing benchmarks and indicators to assist countries to monitor and realize this set of human rights.

3.2 The Minister of Foreign Affairs observed that an important aspect of Canada's international human rights policy is to promote Canadian values and resonate with domestic priorities. For example, the political will to tackle child poverty at home reinforces the legitimacy of Canada's activism on children's rights internationally. On thematic priorities, it was observed that labour standards and children's rights