

whether there ever is a role for a real "hard" sanction in connection with violation of core labour rights. This is in some sense a marginal question because Burma represents the "rogue state" scenario, rather than the typical problem. Yet the failure to address the rare but extraordinarily flagrant case may be costly to the system as a whole.

As a general matter the issue of "linkage" between the ILO, and WTO trade sanctions, is dead. Brute opposition by large numbers of developing countries has ensured this result. More importantly, a sanctions approach is inconsistent with the coherence agenda approach to the core labour rights issue. Thus the "no sanctions" result is to be welcomed if the link between the WTO and the ILO, and the creation of hard trade sanctions for labour rights violations, was to be conceived of as opening the possibility for unilateral action and as part of an isolated (non-integrated) approach to labour rights issues. Nonetheless, the legitimate policy question remains as to whether there is ever a role for hard sanctions. As a matter of principle there ought to be, but it ought to be reserved for cases, where the problem is not simply capacity, but rather political will. Even here, to ensure legitimate use, multilateral action based upon violation of agreed multilateral norms, as opposed to unilateral action based upon unilateral standards, would have to be ensured. But there is no reason in principle to think that in cases of massive violations of labour rights, such as Burma where the violations have been described as constituting "a crime against humanity",³⁵ there is no role for such sanctions. Canada's policy position ought to be that there are truly "hard cases" where the problem is lack of "political will" and where the threat of sanctions and the exercise of sanctions may provide a useful tool. But, as always, the use of such remedies has to be tempered with the knowledge of their limitations, their potential for harming the very group intended to be helped, and their possible damage to the system as a whole. The ILO's handling of the Burma case demonstrates that there can be non-protectionist, legitimate humanities-based, fair and multilateral decisions taken in such cases. Once this is established, then the question of when to invoke sanctions is purely strategic and one of gauging their effectiveness in altering behaviour. There is no argument from principle, within the trade system or elsewhere, against this point.

(c) Canada and the World Commission on the
Social Dimensions of Globalization at the ILO

In February 2000 the ILO delivered on its promise to establish a World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization consisting of 21 "eminent" individuals including two sitting heads of state, a Nobel Laureate in Economics (Joe Stiglitz) and a range of other international personalities. The establishment of the Commission is entirely congruent with the coherence agenda - its goal is to promote international dialogue and to forge a consensus on creating a global economy of just and sustainable societies. A large part of its mission aims at empirical clarification of the underpinnings of the integrated agenda. This is certainly the correct area for research, and international dialogue, and it is one which Canada needs urgently to support. A crucial issue for the Commission will be not only to address the correct agenda, but to do so in a coherent and non-marginalized manner. The Commission will

³⁵ ILO Commission Report