

## VIII. HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT THE "COHERENCE AGENDA"?

We have identified our reasons and our fundamental policy goal - developing a coherence agenda on core labour rights based upon an integrated understanding of their role in just and durable societies and economies. This, along with the constant reminder that the politics of this issue have been, and will be tough and that there is still significant incentive to continue marginalization in the labour agenda in general.

Calls for an integrated and coherent approach might (unrealistically) be taken as a call for an end to institutional specialization - an integration of the ILO, example, into a more general economic institution. But a division of labour is still called for and at the institutional level and integration and coherence are much more likely to be achieved - at least in the medium term - via inter-institutional co-operation under a shared understanding of an overall policy objective. Thus the main policy objective ought to be one of strengthening institutional understanding of, and capacity to undertake, the coherence agenda on the one hand, and developing and strengthening concrete institutional links (between the ILO and the international financial institutions (where there are small signs of life) and with the WTO (where there are far fewer vital indicators)).

### 1. Canadian Policy Regarding the ILO

Canada is a key supporter, and has been for some time, of the ILO and its mission. As we have noted, the ILO is perhaps most famous as a lawmaking and "adjudicating" machine (albeit one without hard remedies). But there are two central dimensions to the ILO which need to be emphasized and are sometimes overlooked. First, there is the ILO's role as a potential, at least, prime site of expertise, resources, and legitimacy regarding the provision of technical assistance in the broadest sense on labour issues internationally. There is an addition to this technical assistance role, the role of the ILO as a potential, at least, dominant centre and research network hub, for empirical and normative analysis of labour market issues within the coherence framework.

One of the great accomplishments of the ILO, which Canada has supported, has been its recent shift of focus as expressed in the new ILO mantra "Decent Work". The essence of the Decent Work agenda is a fixing upon a limited number of policy objectives organized around a single framework. This has been accompanied by internal administrative restructuring and reform and a more "management by objectives" approach to allocation of resources. Part and parcel of this effort has been a concentration upon the "core" labour rights. Within this framework, what should Canada's ILO objectives be?

#### (a) Ratification of Convention 98

Canada has been a supporter of the 1998 ILO Declaration and indeed was instrumental in securing the passage of the Declaration under the leadership of Ambassador Mark Moher. The essence of the Declaration is to commit members of the ILO to promotion of the core labour