

standards and the relative weakness of multilateral monitoring mechanisms, such as the ILO.

**4.3** The overarching issue concerning the linkage of trade and human rights is what governments like Canada can do to enhance "human defences" to the adverse impacts of opening up of markets. The Government can and should be more willing to engage Canadians on the complexities of and synergies in the relationship between our trade and human rights objectives.

**4.4** It was noted, however, that policy coherence on this issue is undermined by mixed messages from ministerial levels of government. What are the prospects for greater consistency of messages and approaches within the Cabinet? The chasm in public opinion may also be reduced by widening the net of organizations that participate in trade missions, to include the labour movement, for example.

**4.5** Most participants agreed that the Government should play an active role to facilitate dialogue and collaboration between the private and voluntary sector on trade and human rights, and that there is considerable scope for the private sector to develop voluntary codes of corporate conduct.

**4.6** Multinational corporations, such as Shell and Nike, invest significant resources in outreach and market research to determine public attitudes to their investment decisions and business plans, suggesting considerable potential to insert human rights principles into business practices. In the context of labour standards, and child labour in particular, the Government can add its support to "social labelling" initiatives, such as "Rugmark."

**4.7** The environmental movement may also provide lessons to the human rights community. Non-governmental organizations in Canada and abroad have developed sectoral natural resource stewardship codes in which distributors, producers, and consumers voluntarily agree to a