

multinationals which benefit from the low labor standards for the costs of their overseas production. However, it could result in gains for the producers in the sanctions-imposing country if the multinationals do not have operations in the targeted country (that which is submitted to trade sanctions, if it is not able to meet some labor rights defined by the sanctions-imposing country) and if such multinationals could get a market share of the domestic producers which are indeed their competitors on the domestic as well as international markets. If some trade sanctions are applied to selected countries, there will be a clear economic advantage for the others. But, if it could be possible to apply them to every country that do not comply with some labor standards (universally recognized), then trade sanctions could be justifiable. However, as said Howse and Trebilcock (1996: 74-75), even in an ideal world where all citizens would share the same labor and environmental concerns, labor and environmental laws and regulations would substantially differ between countries, because of climatic, demographic and geopolitical conditions. As in the case of the NAALC, labor rights requirements do not call for all signatories of international Conventions to have the same laws, but to have laws suitable for each individual country. The Director-General of ILO asserted in his 1997 Report (p. 12, 23-24) that denying developing countries the advantages which ensue from differences in levels of development would be tantamount to denying them a share in the profits of globalization and then the possibility of subsequent social development. However, such comparative advantage (stimulating exports and attracting foreign direct investment) should not be artificially maintained to the detriment of social progress. Finally, there are internationally recognized labour standards, whose application is nothing but country-specific.

Higher labor rights universally recognized could also make an end to the "race to the bottom", the pursuit of the lowest labor standards for profit maximization. But we must be realistic in searching for a "common acceptable floor" rather than an "ideal ceiling". Finally, higher labor standards could, in some circumstances, do more harm than good, if the outcome is nothing but a substantial increase in unemployment, a lower per capita income, the degenerescence of the existing social welfare nets. The exports of the targeted products will decrease, so that demand will shift from imports to domestic production. However, long-run positive impacts on global welfare could followed from higher labor