

help to cut across several sources of potential inconsistency in Canadian approaches to international human rights. Moreover, both these issues provide Canada an entrée into societies and governments which may be more resistant to addressing other human rights issues.

4.0 Trade and Human Rights. Several participants agreed that trade and human rights are often mutually supportive rather than conflicting policy objectives. The issue must be set in the broader context of globalization, which is weakening the ability of states to maintain national standards. One impact of globalization is the dispersal of decision-making power upward into regional or global trade arrangements, and downward into subsidiary levels of governance through devolution or decentralization.

4.1 The meeting discussed two contentious issues regarding appropriate tools and forums for addressing the linkage of human rights and trade. On the issue of sanctions, there was some consensus among business and labour representatives that unilateral trade sanctions serve symbolic purposes which may undermine the predictability of the world trading system. A business representative noted that foreign direct investment is a more important agent of change and openness than trade, and is one justification for doing business with non-democratic regimes. Business people are also citizens. And they are as concerned as other citizens about human rights and child labour. Issues such as the rule of law, a predictable framework for contracts, transparency, corruption, and access to information are vital considerations in the development of investment and business plans.

4.2 The membership of at least one Canadian business umbrella organization argues, however, that international labour standards are better addressed through the ILO than through the World Trade Organization. In response, representatives of NGOs and the labour movement explained that the recent activism to link labour standards to multilateral trade forums, such as the World Trade Organization, reflects the inability or unwillingness of governments to enforce domestic