

represent a lost opportunity to promote the coherence agenda if it is too strongly tied to the ILO per se, and if its consultation and research do not reach well beyond traditional sources of input on labour issues. Engagement with institutions and experts on trade, finance, human rights, foreign affairs, development, at both the international, regional, national and non-governmental level will be crucial to the Commission's success. Canada's position ought to be one of the promotion of the idea that while the Commission is "at" the ILO, it is not solely "of" the ILO. Canada should promote the widest form of consultation to achieve this end. As a matter of substantive contribution, there are a number of concrete empirical and normative dimensions upon which contributions can be made. However, given the theme of this study, the Commission is best seen as providing an immediate opportunity to Canadian policymakers, to articulate a preliminary version of "coherence agenda" in order to offer the Commission Canada's best understanding of its goals and their significance. This involves constructing, in effect, a mission statement for Canada's approach to the global economy and its role within it.

(d) Canada and Institutional Strengthening within the ILO

The ILO can be strengthened internally in terms of its existing processes and within the new overall framework of Decent Work. (I leave for another occasion whether the Decent Work framework is itself the best conceptualization of the ILO's role under a "coherence framework" of thinking.) In a recent communication the Commission of the European Union articulated a number of elements of a reform agenda, including the following:

- Means for giving greater weight to the observations made in the Reports of the Committee of experts on the application of Conventions, notably with regard to the core Conventions, and for ensuring a more systematic followup of these observations. This should involve enhanced technical assistance.
- Giving greater publicity to the supervisory mechanism, in particular as far as the core Conventions are concerned. This would aim in ensuring that the international obligations contracted by companies in the ILO for ratification of Conventions are given great attention throughout the international system.
- Possible measures to improve the effectiveness of complaint procedures. A number of countries have introduced autonomous measures to suspend development co-operation (or GSP benefits in cases of grave and persistent violations of core labour standards). There would appear to be advantages in terms of greater coherence - if such actions were to be taken not as a result of unilateral assessment, but following resorted ILO complaint procedures. It should be noted, however, that these complaint procedures only apply in the case of countries which have ratified development core Conventions.

In addition to strengthening the effectiveness of the existing supervisor mechanism, thought could be given to new promotional means for encouraging effective respect for core labour standards. The following ideas could be considered in this context: