

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

LABOUR

Article 18.01: Affirmations

The Parties affirm their obligations as members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and their commitments to the *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (1998) and its follow-up as well as their continuing respect for each other's Constitution and laws.

Article 18.02: Objectives

The Parties wish to build on their respective international commitments, strengthen their cooperation on labour matters and in particular to:

- (a) improve working conditions and living standards in each Party's territory;
- (b) promote their commitment to the internationally recognized labour principles and rights;
- (c) promote compliance with and effective enforcement by each Party of its labour law;
- (d) promote social dialogue on labour matters among workers and employers, and their respective organizations, and governments;
- (e) pursue cooperative labour-related activities for the Parties' mutual benefit;

- (f) strengthen the capacity of each Party's competent authorities to administer and enforce labour law in its territory; and
- (g) foster full and open exchange of information between these competent authorities regarding labour law and its application in each Party's territory.

Article 18.03: Obligations

In order to further the objectives, the Parties' mutual obligations are set out in the *Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Panama* ("Agreement on Labour Cooperation") addressing, among other things:

- (a) general obligations concerning internationally recognized labour principles and rights that are to be embodied in each Party's domestic labour law;
- (b) a commitment not to derogate from domestic labour law in order to encourage trade or investment;
- (c) effective enforcement of labour laws through appropriate government action, private rights of action, procedural guarantees, public information and awareness;
- (d) institutional mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the Agreement on Labour Cooperation, such as a Ministerial Council, national advisory committees and national offices to receive and review public communications on specified labour law matters and to enable cooperative activities to further the objectives of the Agreement on Labour Cooperation;

- (e) general and ministerial consultations regarding the implementation of the Agreement on Labour Cooperation and its obligations; and
- (f) independent review panels to hold hearings and make determinations regarding alleged non-compliance with the terms of the Agreement on Labour Cooperation and, if requested, monetary assessments.

Article 18.04: Cooperative Activities

The Parties recognize that labour cooperation plays an important role in advancing the level of compliance with labour principles and rights and as such the Agreement on Labour Cooperation provides for the development of a plan of action for cooperative labour activities to promote the objectives of the Agreement on Labour Cooperation. An indicative list of areas of possible cooperation between the Parties is set out in the Agreement on Labour Cooperation.