

## ***NAMA trade unions say to WTO “Stop, wrong way, go back”***

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Following yesterday’s announcement that there has been movement in the WTO negotiations, including in the Non-Agricultural Market Access discussions on industrial tariffs, trade unions from developing countries called on the WTO members to reject the proposals circulated by WTO Director General Pascal Lamy in the so-called green room meeting last night.

“Under this NAMA proposal, developing countries will face massive unemployment and their development prospects will be severely damaged. The proposals on the table are the complete opposite of pro-development, and make a mockery of the principles behind the Doha Development Agenda,” said Zwelinzima Vavi, the General Secretary of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions).

“Yet again, the powerful developed countries are deciding the fate of developing country workers. We call on our governments to stand firmly together in the face of this attack on our capacity to protect our industries and improve the lives of our citizens, and in particular reject the anti-concentration clause which will wreak even more damage” commented Hilda Sanchez, advisor to the regional trade union body TUCA (International Trade Union Confederation for the Americas).

“The global trade union movement is deeply concerned by these developments. The NAMA package is no different to what has been rejected many times before. Back then it was unacceptable, and it remains unacceptable,” said Esther Busser, trade advisor to the International Trade Union Confederation.

According to Antonio Lisboa Vale, of the Brazilian national trade union center CUT (Central Union of Workers), “Our position is that the Brazilian government should continue privileging the MERCOSUR process. Any arrangement that undermines our regional integration ambitions should be rejected.

The table below outlines the potential cuts in tariff lines that developing countries would have to make. It clearly shows that these countries will be made to cut tariffs at a grossly disproportionate rate to developed countries (EU, US, Japan), who would only be asked to cut by a coefficient of 8, making the average percentage reduction only 27.9 per cent.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Initial NAMA tariff - national simple bound average</b>	<b>Final average tariff with a 20 coefficient</b>	<b>Average percentage reduction</b>
Argentina	31.8	12.3	61.4%
Brazil	30.8	12.1	60.6%
India	34.3	12.6	63.2%
Mexico	34.9	12.7	63.6%
Philippines	23.4	10.8	53.9%
South Africa	15.7	8.8	44.0%

“Each of these cuts translates into hundreds of thousands of jobs lost, thousands of families not being able to afford a decent life, and hundreds of years of winding back the

clock on our industrial development.” – Jose Luis Hernandez, the Vice-President of the Mexican National Union of Workers (UNT).

Even more concerning is the effects these cuts will have on sensitive sectors. South African clothing industry tariffs will be cut by 60 per cent, putting some 100,000 jobs at risk. The textiles sector in Mexico faces a 50 per cent tariff cut, with some 150,000 jobs facing annihilation. In the car industry in Argentina, the applied rate would come down by nearly 50% using a coefficient of 25.

“For the metals sector, the proposed deals signify the destruction of important industrial sectors and thousands of jobs. If this agreement on NAMA is signed, it will take us back to a time in our history where an absent state and rampant liberalisation brought us to the worst crisis ever known in Argentina,” commented Eduardo Paladin, advisor to the Argentine steelworkers’ union UOM/FITIM.

“The Philippines must stand firmly together with the NAMA-11 and the G33 and play a crucial role in galvanizing the other members of these alliances to become even stronger and united in the fight for the interests of developing countries,” commented Tony Salvador, from the Alliance of Progressive Labour in the Philippines.

“Where are principles of less than full reciprocity, where are the lofty ideals of turning the world trade system into a tool for development – they are no where to be evidenced in any of the deals on the table – agriculture, NAMA or what is mooted for services,” said Ariel Castro, director of education of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

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