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FAWU: Statement by FAWU on AGOA and the SA's Anti-dumping duties on poultry products from the USA

The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) is of a view that the last minute deal expected to be reached under the new AGOA arrangements shouldn't undermine economic development and employment sustainability, directly or indirectly, in the Poultry Sector of South Africa.

The FAWU' stance is informed by its policy decisions that manufacturing industry in this country must be defended and expanded and food security needs to be entrenched as a matter of government policy imperative. Our government is now being asked to subject our Poultry Sector to increased dumped poultry tonnages from the USA, more than double the allowable tonnage limit under the current AGOA agreement.

It is clear that the much higher 'dumped' poultry will negatively affect job retention and may cause major downward pressure on wages. It will also push certain local firms to the edge, and some may close shop. The trade-off is that should the Poultry Sector accept this, the US Congress would continue the AGOA import terms for the SA Auto Sector!

Indeed, this will be great news, which we welcome for the auto sector and auto workers, their families and communities dependent on US demand for SA-made cars. However, this is not such great news for the thousands of poultry workers, mostly women, who will face increase job losses in the light of this increased volume of dumped poultry products from the USA.

FAWU cannot endorse this trade-off or trading job security for some with job losses for others. This approach creates artificial barriers between workers from different sectors and does little to help expanded manufacturing and overall economic development. Decent wages and decent work should be for all workers in all sectors.

We hope that our government will not easily give in to the blackmail by the Congress and will still insist on the better deal for our country and the entire manufacturing sector in this last minute deal making of AGOA agreement. We hope the USA Congress members will find it compelling to give this aspiration an expression in whatever stance they take.

Issued by FAWU