



FAWU MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: 15th January 2026.

Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) Media Statement Condemning the Imminent Closure of British American Tobacco South Africa.

The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) notes with deep concern and outrage the imminent closure of the only British American Tobacco (BAT) plant in South Africa, something which we picked up through the media, FAWU place it on record that they were not consulted before this decision was made and shall as a result extend an invitation to BAT to come and take the union in their confidence in this regard. This development represents not only a devastating blow to thousands of workers and their families, but also a direct threat to the broader economy and industrial stability of our country.

We place the blame squarely at the doorstep of government. The failure to decisively deal with the rampant illicit trade in tobacco products has crippled the industry, undermined legitimate businesses, and eroded the tax base. Instead of protecting workers and industries, government has pursued policies that are not business-friendly, not conducive to economic growth, and ultimately destructive to job creation.

FAWU warns that unless government urgently changes course, we risk facing similar crises in other sectors. The soft drinks industry is already under severe pressure due to the sugar tax, which has proven to be anti-worker, anti-industry, and anti-growth. If this tax is not revoked with

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immediate effect, we may soon witness closures and job losses on a scale comparable to what we now face in the tobacco sector.

We call on the government of the day to do everything in its power to ensure that the BAT plant in South Africa remains operational. Preserving employment must be the highest priority. Workers cannot continue to pay the price for policy failures and indecision.

FAWU stands ready to mobilize in defence of jobs, industries, and the livelihoods of our members. We demand urgent action to protect the tobacco industry, revoke harmful policies such as the sugar tax, and place workers and economic growth at the centre of government's agenda.

For any clarities on the contents of this statement please contact the author on 082 444 4621.

Issued by: Edwin Mabowa
(Acting General Secretary) on behalf of
(Food and Allied Workers Union National office bearers)