

**JOINT LABOR DECLARATION ON THE US-KOREA FTA**  
**September 23, 2010**

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), representing 22 million workers and working families in the U.S., and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) representing 15 million workers and working families in South Korea, are united in our opposition to the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) as negotiated.

**Why We Oppose the KORUS FTA**

1. The current KORUS FTA replicates many of the more troubling aspects of previous trade agreements, which privileged the rights of corporations over the rights of workers, consumers and the general public. The agreement fails to address important economic and social concerns raised by both of our trade union federations when this agreement was negotiated.
2. We are deeply concerned about the potential impact of this agreement on employment and on working conditions, particularly since both economies are struggling to emerge from the current economic crisis. In almost any trade regime change, there will be some sectors that benefit and others that are injured. In the U.S., we are deeply concerned about the likely impact of the agreement on both our industrial base and technology sector. In Korea, we are equally concerned with the impact on our industrial base, and see additional threats to the agricultural sector. This is especially troubling in the absence of adequate schemes to help workers train and transition to decent high quality employment elsewhere in both countries.
3. The KORUS FTA, while containing some important but still insufficient improvements with regard to labor and the environment, still largely replicates the same failed trade model on which previous agreements were based. We remain deeply concerned about the impact of numerous chapters, including investment, government procurement and services. We are also concerned that the agreement may limit governments from prudently regulating their financial sectors to avoid another economic crisis. The Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act of 2009 (H.R. 3012/S. 2821), co-sponsored by 155 members in the U.S. Congress, contains important principles that we believe should guide the renegotiation of the KORUS FTA.
4. We are concerned that both governments are rushing to finalize talks on the KORUS FTA to meet the target of the G20 Summit in Seoul in November. We urge both governments to take the time necessary to address all shared concerns which have been raised, rather than limit the scope of the negotiations in the hope of meeting an arbitrary deadline.
5. Further, as trade union organizations representing workers in the two countries, we voice our deep concerns about the current state of fundamental worker rights and labor standards in both of our countries. We share concerns that violations of workers' rights have reached a crisis level, while secure, decent, and well-paying jobs have been replaced with temporary and irregular work. In both countries, workers are working harder and earning less, and more working families are experiencing poverty. In addition, migrant workers'

rights are not adequately protected, leading to widespread exploitation. Labor law reform in each of our countries is needed to ensure that workers can exercise their fundamental rights and thereby bargain for their fair share of the potential gains of trade. Further, both governments should begin the process to ratify ILO Core Conventions 87 and 98 without delay.

6. As consumers and active participants in our communities, we are also concerned about the potential impact of the agreement on public and social services, the environment, public health and education.

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1. We call upon our governments to thoroughly review and renegotiate the KORUS FTA to ensure that it supports the creation of good jobs in both countries, and to undertake the additional reforms needed to ensure that workers in both countries are afforded their fundamental labor rights, including their rights to organize and to bargain collectively. Negotiators must build upon improvements made to the trade agreement model in 2007 with regard to the chapters on labor and the environment and finally address workers' concerns with regard to investment, government procurement, services (including financial services) and other key chapters.

2. We call on our governments to undertake the additional labor law reforms that are needed to assure that workers in both countries are afforded their fundamental labor rights, including their rights to organize and to bargain collectively. Both countries must also ratify ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

3. If the trade agreement is not thoroughly reviewed and renegotiated to address our concerns, we call upon elected representatives to oppose the KORUS FTA. In such a case, we will also call upon our members to vigorously oppose the KORUS FTA, in coordination with their unions and union federations. We will make every effort to ensure that our voices are heard on the road to the G20 Summit in Seoul.



Richard L. Trumka, President  
AFL-CIO



Kim Young-Hoon, President  
Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU)