

**8% for Workers –
37% for the Boss**

The Namibian Wage Bargaining
& Directors' Remuneration Report 2007

Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI)

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Abbreviations

AWARD	Actual Wage Rate Database
BON	Bank of Namibia
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
FNV	Netherlands Trade Union Federation
LaRRI	Labour Resource and Research Institute
LRS	Labour Research Service
MANWU	Metal and Allied Namibia Workers Union
MUN	Mine Workers Union of Namibia
NAFAU	Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union
NAFWU	Namibia Farm Workers Union
NANTU	Namibia National Teachers Union
NAPWU	Namibia Public Workers Union
NATAU	Namibia Transport and Allied Workers Union
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSX	Namibian Stock Exchange
LFS	Labour Force Survey

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- MANWU (Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union),
- MUN (Mine Workers Union of Namibia),
- NAFAU (Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union),
- NAFWU (Namibia Farm Workers Union),
- NANTU (Namibia National Teachers Union),
- NAPWU (Namibia Public Workers Union),
- NATAU (Namibia Transport and Allied Workers Union)

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Introduction

There is little doubt about the importance of wage incomes to individuals. Wages are the primary (and in many cases sole) income of 47% of all households in Namibia. Over the past few years' trade unions in Namibia have fought a battle for better wages and working conditions for their members through collective bargaining. The aim was to improve workers' living standards and to reduce income inequality while at the same time encouraging worker participation in the workplace.

The year 2007 was a difficult year for trade unionist to operate in. The high interest rates, raising oil prices and the general increase in the costs of living made wage negotiations difficult. Another challenge faced by trade unions was the decline in membership due to the restructuring of companies as a result of competition and as an attempt to increase profitability. This often meant workers losing permanent jobs as "flexible" forms of employment were increased, such as contract and casual jobs.

This is the fourth review of the wage bargaining report and shows significant differences to the outcomes of collective bargaining in Namibia. This year the analysis was extended to include the different forms of centralised bargaining in Namibia, income inequality and the role of unions. The first part of this report reviews the minimum wages per sector; compares minimum wages as well as the highest wages attained by selected trade unions. The second part looks at the remuneration of executive and non-executive directors and compares them to minimum wages in 2007.

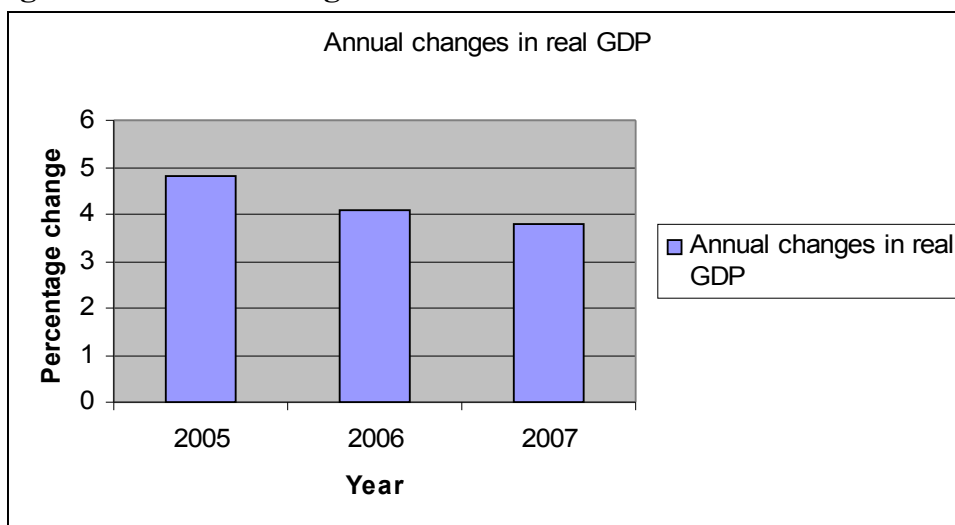
Brief Economic Review 2007

The economic review is meant to outline the economic environment that provided the framework for collective bargaining in 2007. It is also a reflection of what may have affected the bargaining outcomes. The pegging of the Namibian dollar to the South African Rand is a contributing factor that resulted in the spill over of events in the South African economy. Namibia imported goods to the value of N\$ 21 561 345 223 (N\$ 21,56 billion) from South Africa in 2007.

Economic Growth

The Namibian economy's growth rate in 2007 was 3.8 percent - a decline of 0.3 percent from 2006. The annual change in real GDP has decreased moderately over the years. Figure 3 depicts the decrease in real GDP although some sectors performed well such as financial intermediation.

Figure 3: Annual changes in real GDP



The growth in value in the agriculture and forestry sector as well as the fishing sector declined due to the drought experienced and a decrease in fish catches. There was an increase in the value-addition in the manufacturing sector due to growth of meat, fish and other manufacturing sub-sectors. The value in meat processing rose due to an increase in marketing of beef and small stock carcasses and meat cuts.

It is estimated that the electricity, gas and water sub-sectors expanded by 3.5% in 2007 due to increased efforts to generate power domestically and a decrease in power supply from Eskom. The increase in interest rates led to a decrease in the growth of the construction sub-sector.

Value addition in the hotels and restaurants sub-sector rose by only 0.9% in 2007 while growth in value addition in the financial intermediation sector stood at 5.0%. A major contributor to the value in the financial intermediation was the profits in the banking system caused by the high and rising interest rates. There was also a positive growth in the wholesale and retail trade mainly due to an increase in the number of vehicles sold.

Inflation

High food prices coupled with high and volatile international oil prices were the main contributing factors to the increase in inflation rates. The annual average inflation rate increased from 5.1% in 2006 to 6.7% in 2007. Since Namibia imports most of its consumer goods from South Africa, it is directly affected by South Africa's inflation.

Food and non-alcoholic beverages together with transport were the major contributors to the rising inflation. The global milk shortage, rising fuel prices, the increase in bio-fuel production and global speculation led to increased food prices. Price increases were also experienced in the alcoholic beverages, tobacco, clothing and footwear, furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance sectors.

Foreign trade and payments

Merchandise trade balance

The merchandise trade balance recorded a deficit of about N\$400 million compared to a surplus of N\$ 600 million in 2006. The increased value of imports can be attributed to currency depreciation and to higher costs of imported fuel. The increase in export value is mainly due to exports in minerals, food and live animals, hides and skins, karakul wool and pelts. Increased export earnings can be attributed to higher international commodity prices and a depreciation of the local currency.

Foreign direct investment (FDI)

Foreign direct investment in Namibia is made up of equity capital, reinvested earnings and other capital of foreign companies. In 2007, FDI increased to N\$4.9 billion compared to N\$2.6 billion in 2006. This increase is as a result of increase equity capital in the mining sector as well as reinvested earnings. Equity capital rose by N\$ 1 billion in 2007 to N\$3.9 billion from 2006 while reinvested earnings also increased to N\$1.3 billion. Overall, there was a net outflow of capital to the value of N\$240 million in 2007, a decrease from N\$1.4 billion recorded in 2006. This is a result of a decrease in liabilities in the form of loans in 2007 between related companies. The increase in equity capital and reinvested earnings in

Namibia reflects a degree of confidence by foreign investors in the Namibian economy.

Income inequality in Namibia and the role of unions

Namibia is a country with a highly skewed income distribution and a Gini-coefficient¹ of 0.63, according to the 2003/2004 Namibia Household Income & Expenditure Survey. This makes Namibia the most unequal country in the world, followed by Haiti, Brazil and South Africa (Central Bureau of Statistics 2008). Namibia inherited social and economic inequality from the colonial apartheid system at independence and despite widespread poverty is classified as a lower-middle income country. The high incomes of a few have pushed the annual per capita income up to N\$ 8 839 for Namibia.

According to the Namibian Labour Force Survey 2004 (LFS), 46.9% of Namibian households depend on wages and salaries as their main source of income with 68.4% of them not having a secondary source of income. In urban areas 74.3% depends on wages & salaries as the main source of income. This is a clear indication of the dependency of the Namibian population on wages and salaries and the importance of collective bargaining by trade unions to improve the standard of living of workers.

A closer look at the annual consumption by households in Namibia reveals that Namibians spend 24.3% of their total expenditure on food and beverages (including alcoholic beverages and tobacco), 21.3% on housing and 16% on transport/communication. In urban areas 23.7% of household income is spent on housing, followed by 15.7% on food/beverages. In rural areas 38.7% of household income is spent on food/beverages followed by 17.2% on housing.

The 2003/2004 Namibia Household Income & Expenditure Survey states that the annual average household income was N\$ 43 521. It was much higher in urban areas with N\$ 66 620 while the annual average household income in rural areas stood at only N\$ 27 798. Adjustment to inflation rates for 2005 (2.2%), 2006 (5.1 %) and 2007(6.7%) brings the annual average household income to N\$ 49 878, 90 in 2007 (N\$ 76 352,40 in urban households).

Figure 1 below reflects the inflation-adjusted annual average household income in 2007 (in both urban and rural areas) as well as the average minimum wage achieved by trade unions. Only the minimum wages achieved by NAPWU in the

¹ The Gini-coefficient is a widely used measure of income distribution with 0 representing a complete equal distribution of income and 1a totally unequal distribution.

public sector are above the average household incomes. The minimum wages achieved by other unions are below this line (see figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1:
Comparison of average minimum wage with household incomes

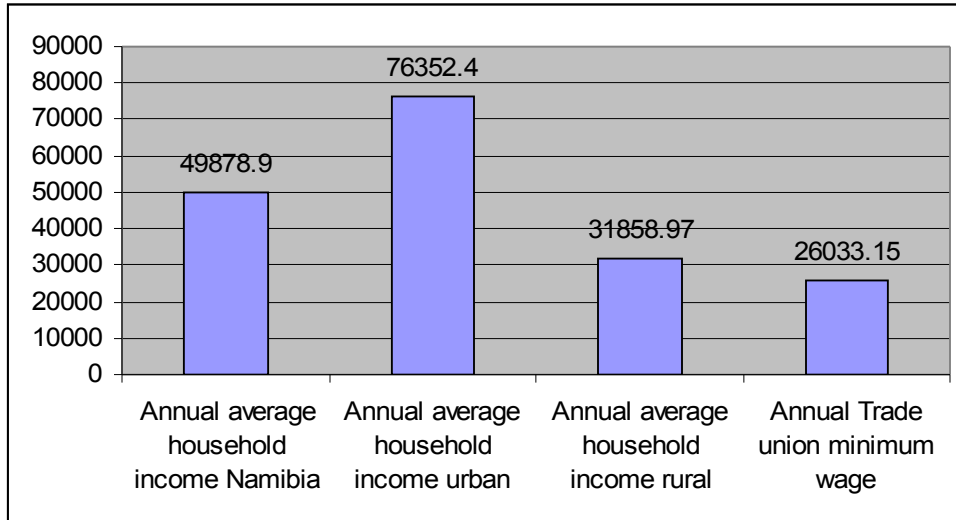
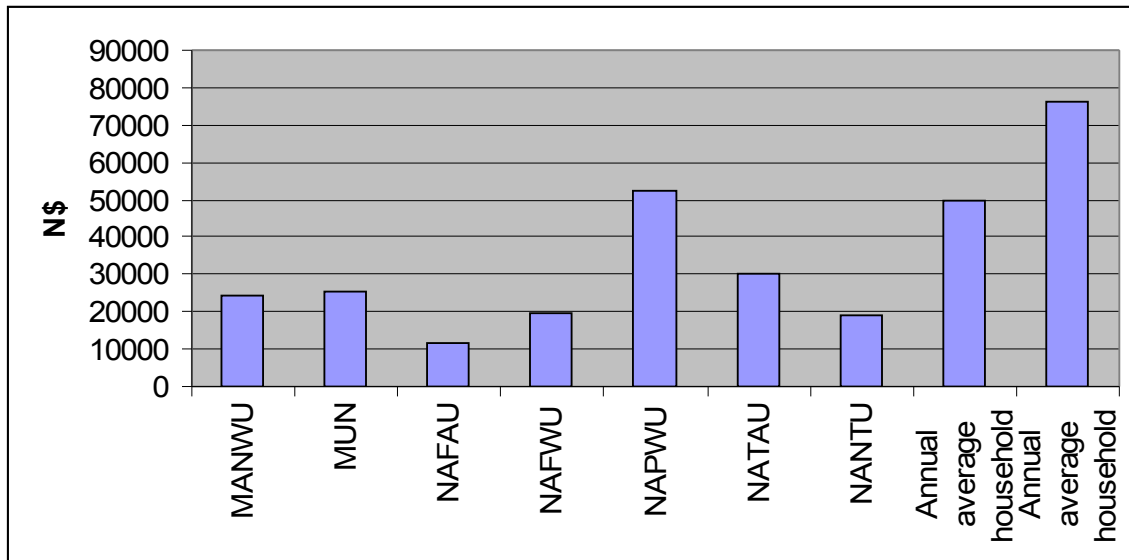


Figure 2:
Comparison of union-specific minimum wages with household incomes



While trade unions aim to improve the wages of workers, they still have not managed to close the wage gap. Trade unions will have to embark on a vigorous

mass campaign to recruit more members and make employers aware that by providing workers with additional benefits they will have a more productive workforce. This could be one strategy to ensure a decent life for all in Namibia. However, trade union efforts alone are not enough to improve the living conditions of workers in Namibia. Government intervention is needed, particularly in those economic sectors that are poorly organised such as domestic workers, farm workers, security guards and petrol station workers. Low wages as reflected in the figures above, make workers vulnerable to stealing, corruption and entrapment by cash loan companies. They may also be forced to hold down more than one job at a time.

Centralized bargaining in Namibia

Currently there are only 3 gazetted centralized bargaining agreements in Namibia, which are legally enforced. Agreements stay enforced until such time a new agreement is signed. They cover the building and construction industry, security industry and the agricultural sector. Centralized bargaining aims to improve the wages of all workers in particular sector irrespective of union membership. It brings about formality and uniformity in a particular sector and is important, especially in those sectors, which employ vulnerable and lowly-paid workers. The non-adherence of some companies poses a serious threat to centralized bargaining, as there are currently insufficient mechanisms in place to enforce compliance. This undermines the sectoral minimum wages. Below is a brief description of each agreement.

Building and Construction Industry

The first agreement was signed in 1993 between the Metal and Allied Namibia Workers Union (MANWU) and the Construction Industries Federation of Namibia (CIF). The agreement is binding on all employees and employers in the construction industry in Namibia and includes minimum wages, minimum conditions of employment, including leave, transport, uniforms etc. The agreement also covers minimum productivity levels (per job category), the living-away allowance, safety requirements, the service allowance (bonus) etc. In 2006 a two-year agreement was concluded to save on time spent on wage negotiations. The agreement serves as a minimum requirement while companies are free to pay higher wages than stipulated in the agreement. The current minimum wage stands at N\$ 8,44 for labourers.

The Security Industry

The agreement was jointly signed in 2005 between the Namibia Security Guard and Watchmen's Union (NASGWU), the Namibian Transport and Allied Workers Union (NATAU) and the Security Association of Namibia (SAN). The agreement covers all security companies irrespective if they are members of SAN or not. The minimum wage was set at an entry level of N\$25 per shift or N\$2, 09 per hour with the employer providing a set of uniforms. The agreement does not stipulate any other benefits to be provided for employees.

After identifying several loopholes in the system, the two unions decided to improve the minimum wages of workers in 2007. After a looming strike and the intervention of the Minister of Labour, the minimum wage was reviewed by all parties and increased to N\$3 per hour in 2007. The agreement also stipulated that employers shall provide all employees with uniforms on the following basis: a newly- appointed employee shall be required to pay a deposit equivalent to the

cost of the uniform. Employers shall refund the deposit to the employee at the time of employee's termination of service upon return of the uniform. The employer shall replace the uniform of each employee as needed at the employer's expense.

The Agricultural Sector

In 2003 an agreement was reached between the Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU), the Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU) and the Namibian Farm Workers Union (NAFWU). This agreement provided for an entry hourly wage of N\$ 2.20 or a monthly wage of N\$ 429. The agreement also makes provisions for workers living on the farms to be provided with housing, including sanitary and water facilities. Workers who are required to reside on agricultural land must be allowed to keep livestock and to carry out cultivation on such land. Workers must also be provided with food rations or receive an additional allowance of at least N\$210 per month. The Namibian Farm Workers Union has been trying since 2006 to review the minimum wage but the farmers' unions were not willing to make adjustments.

Minimum wages by sector

The data in this section was collected from wage agreements of different unions for the period 2000 to 2007. Below is a list of unions covered and the sectors in which they organise:

- The Metal and Allied Namibia Workers Union (MANWU) organises workers in the iron, steel, engineering and metallurgical industry, motor industry, building industry, plastic industry, lift and escalator industry, locksmith trade, karakul processing and the weaver industry.
- The Mine Workers Union (MUN) organises workers in the mining and energy industry.
- The Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union (NAFAU) organises workers in the food, fishing and retail sector as well as clothing and textile industry.
- The Namibia Public Workers Union (NAPWU) organises workers in the public sector, parastatals and local government institutions.
- The Namibia Transport and Allied Workers Union (NATAU) organises workers in the air and road transport industry, including security guards.
- The Namibian Farm Workers Union (NAFWU) organises workers in the agricultural sector and domestic workers.
- The Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) organises teachers and staff of educational institutions.

On average, Namibian worker received an actual minimum wage of N\$ 1676 in 2007 compared to N\$1552 in 2006, which is a monetary wage increase of N\$ 124 or 7.1%. The sectoral analysis reveals that the highest minimum wage of N\$ 2420 was obtained in the mining and quarrying sector. This is followed by the community, social and personal services sector attaining N\$2262.40.

The agriculture and fishing, construction and manufacturing sectors are the sectors where nominal wage increases were equal or below the inflation rate of 6.7%. The decrease in the agriculture sector can be attributed to the drought and high oil prices that led to increased cost of production. The decrease in the fishing sector can be attributed to a decline in fish catches. While the decrease in the construction sector can be attributed to high interest rates. The above led to low wage increases in those sectors.

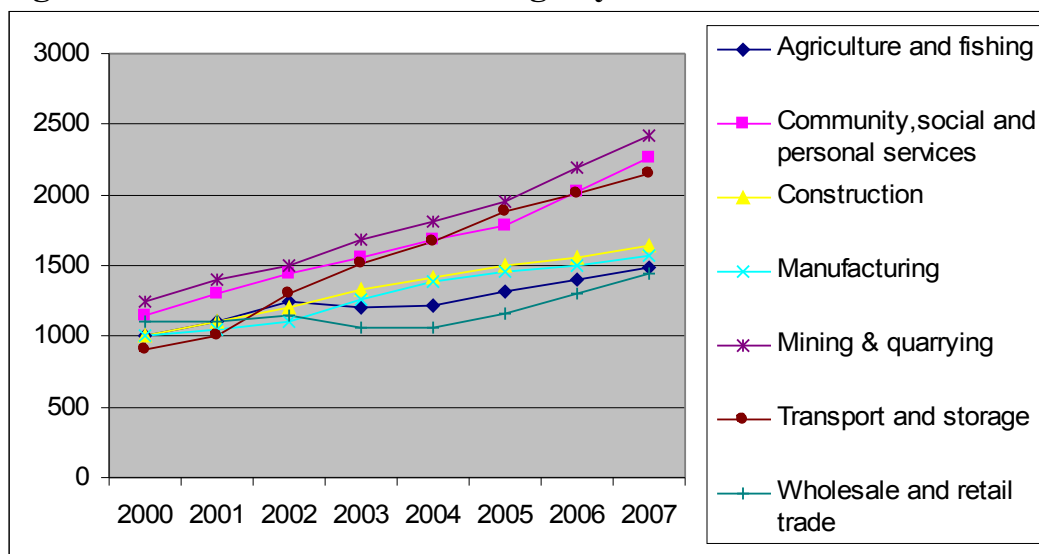
The lowest minimum wages are paid to workers in the agriculture and security sectors as reflected in table 1. This can be attributed to the high number of lowly skilled jobs in these sectors.

Table 1: Average minimum wage by sector

	2007 (N\$)	2006 (N\$)	Nominal wage increase %	Real wage increase %	Working hour per week
Agriculture	428.00	428.00	0	-6.7	45
Fishing	1 493.80	1 400	6.7	0	44.7
Community, social and personal services	2 262.40	2 020	12	5.30	43.4
Construction	1 635.25	1 550	5.5	-1.20	44.0
Manufacturing	1 575	1 500	5	-1.70	44.3
Mining & quarrying	2 420	2 200	10	3.30	44.0
Transport & storage	2 152.02	2 015	6.8	0.10	43.7
Wholesale and retail trade	1 443	1 300	11	4.30	43.3
Total Average	1676.18	1551.63	7.12	0.6	44.05

Figure 3 below depicts the wage increases between 2000 and 2007. In most cases trade unions managed to negotiate at least inflation-related increases and in several sectors increases above the rate of inflation.

Figure 3: Trends in minimum wage by sector 2000-2007



A comparison of minimum wages attained by selected trade unions

The data captured in the AWARD Database allows for a comparison between the agreements reached by different unions. The data below reflects the average minimum wages concluded by MANWU, MUN, NAFWU, NAFAU, NAPWU, NATAU and NANTU.

Despite a slower economic growth in the global and local economy, most trade unions have managed to reach wage increases above the inflation rate of 6.7%. This can be attributed to the quest by trade unions to better the living standards of workers through collective bargaining and to play a prominent role in the campaign of decent wages for all. Preparations by trade unions before negotiations have paid off in terms of higher wage increases.

The average minimum wage achieved by trade unions increased to N\$2002.55 in 2007 from N\$1916 in 2006, which is equivalent to a nominal wage increase of 7.28%. NATAU negotiated the highest wage percentage of 9.25 % followed by MANWU with 9.09%.

NANTU recorded no wage increase due to the 3-year agreement that they have signed with the Namibian government in 2006. The agreement dealt with housing in 2006, transport in 2007 and salary increments in 2008. At the University in Namibia (where NANTU and NAPWU have a joint recognition agreement), staff received only a once-off cash payment in 2007. This consisted of 4% of six months' basic salary, plus 4% of eight months' housing allowance, plus 4% of the annual bonus.

Table 2: Minimum wages by trade union

Union	Average Minimum wage 2007 (N\$)	Average minimum wage 2006 (N\$)	Nominal wage increase (%)	Real wage increase (%)
MANWU	1 887.26	1 730	9.09	2.39
MUN	1 938.42	1 801	7.63	0.93
NAFWU	886.31	815	8.75	2.05
NAFAU	1 488.48	1 293	8.97	2.27
NAPWU	4 044.40	3 771	7.25	0.55
NATAU (without security industry)	2 315.01	2 119	9.25	2.55
NANTU	1 458	1 458	0	-6.7
Total	2 002.55	1 916	7.28	0.58

A comparison of the highest wages attained by trade unions

Unions negotiate wages for all workers who are part of the bargaining unit. The following data are those of the highest paid categories of workers in the bargaining unit. The data was collected from the following unions:

- Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU) whose highest wage covers the following occupations: electricians, salesmen, carpenters, supervisors and drivers.
- Mine Workers Union of Namibia (MUN) whose highest wage covers the following occupations: technicians, drivers, operators and production foremen.
- Namibia Farm Workers Union (NAFWU) whose highest wage covers the foremen on farms.
- Namibia Public Workers Union (NAPWU) whose highest wage covers the following occupations: accountants, human resource managers, departmental heads, area managers and public relations officers.

- Namibia Transport and Allied Workers Union (NATAU) whose highest wage covers the following occupations: supervisors, mechanics, clerks and drivers.
- Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union (NAFAU) whose highest wage covers the following occupations: drivers, quality controllers and supervisors.

Companies use different grading systems to compensate workers, with the Paterson grading system the most popular choice. Workers are put into different grading categories depending on their work experience and educational level and compensated accordingly.

Table 3 below indicates the average wage in the highest categories of the bargaining unit for 2007 to be N\$ 6268.38 - an increase of N\$ 426.93 (or 7,1%) from 2006. The wages of NAFWU, NAFAU and NATAU were all below the total average of N\$ 6268.38. This is mainly due to the sectors they represent. The wages negotiated by MANWU, MUN and NAPWU were above the average.

Table 3: Highest wage in bargaining unit by trade union

	2007	2006	Nominal wage increase (%)	Real wage increase (%)
MANWU	6652.06	6132.63	8.47	1.77
MUN	6996.09	6500.13	7.63	0.93
NAFWU (without sectoral agreement)	2915.55	2790	4.50	-2.20
NAFAU	3634.46	3346.96	8.59	1.89
NAPWU	12696.31	11838.05	7.25	0.55
NATAU (without security industry)	4715.80	4440.91	6.19	-0.51
Total	6268.38	5841.45	7.11	0.41

NAFAU attained the highest percentage wage increase of 8.59% followed by MANWU with 8.47%. NAFWU attained the lowest wage increase due to the

vulnerability of the sector they represent followed by NATAU, which represents the majority of workers in the transport sector. During 2007, the transport sector was directly affected by an increase in oil prices, which resulted in increased costs for companies and relatively low wage increase for workers.

At the upper end of the bargaining unit, NAFWU and NATAU agreed to wage increases below the inflation rate during 2007, while the rest of the unions achieved increases above 7 percent.

Figure 4: Trend in highest wages by trade union 2000 – 2007

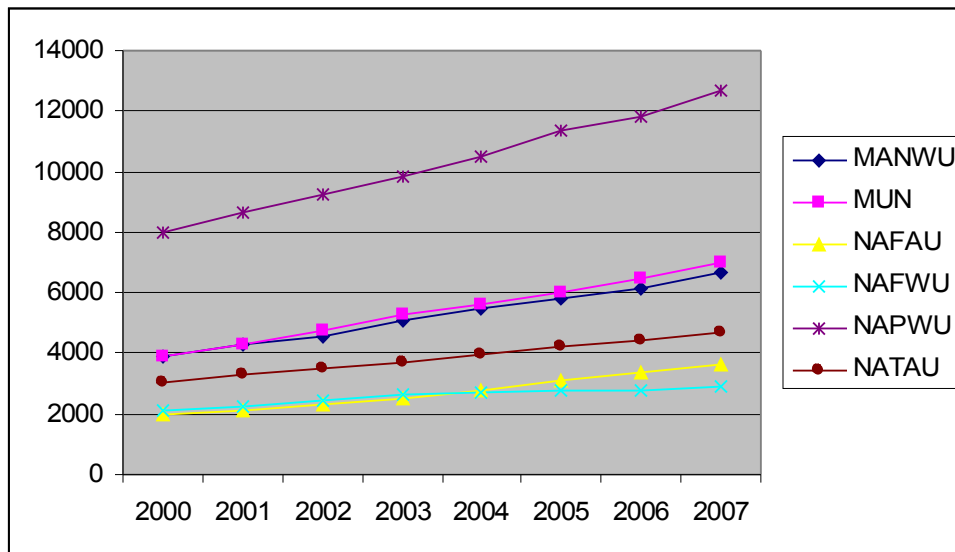


Figure 4 above shows the monetary trend of the highest wages negotiated by unions in the bargaining unit between 2000 and 2007. It is clear that efforts by unions have resulted in increasing wages for workers. NAPWU is the union with the highest paid members in the bargaining unit followed by MUN.

Directors' fees in 2007

The data was collected from company annual reports that are listed on the Namibian Stock Exchange (NSX) in 2007. The Namibian Stock exchange was officially launched in 1992 with founding members donating N\$10 000 each to act as start-up capital for the first three years. It is a fairly small stock exchange with a limited number of Namibian companies listed while foreign companies dominate it. The single biggest reason why not many Namibian companies are listed is because they do not meet the basic requirements. These include share capital amounting to a minimum of N\$ 1 million. Other requirements are a minimum of a 1 million shares must be issued; a profitable trading record for three years must be presented with a current audited profit before tax of at least N\$ 500 000; and an acceptable record in its field of business and adequate management to maintain business must be provided.

However the NSX established the Development Capital Board for listing companies that do not comply with some or all of the above criteria. The purpose of the Development Capital Board is to facilitate listings of new ventures/business that do not yet have an adequate track record.

During 2007, 26 companies were listed while 3 were delisted by the end of the year. The sample used here is small and less representative of the economy although clearly illustrating the wide income gaps. The following companies' annual reports were used in the analysis:

- Anglo-American Plc-Industries metals
- CIC Holdings-General industries
- Namibia Breweries-Beverages
- Oceana Group Ltd- Food producer
- Edgars Consolidated Ltd-General retailers
- Nictus-General industries
- Shoprite Holdings-Food & drug retailers
- Firstrand- Banks
- FNB Holdings-Banks
- Santam Ltd-Non-life insurance
- Namibia Harvest Investment-General finance
- Oryx Ltd-Real estate

Executive Directors' fees

An executive director is a senior manager or chief executive officer in charge of the day-to-day operations of a company. In 2007, the annual average enumeration for Executive Directors' increased by N\$ 438 374 from N\$ 1 194 109 to N\$ 1 632 483. This represents an increase of 37%.

Table 4:

Comparison of average Executive Directors fee to minimum wages

	2007	2006	Percentage increase
Annual average executive director	1 632 483	1 194 109	37%
Minimum wage	26 033	24 915	8,3%
Ratio: Average executive director: minimum wage	63:1	48:1	

Table 4 illustrates the growing gap between the executive directors' fees and minimum wages. While there was a modest increase of N\$ 1 118 in the average minimum wage of workers, executive directors' fees increase by an incredible N\$ 438 374 or 37%. A comparison between the two salaries reveals that the ordinary worker had to work 63 years to earn what an executive director earned in 2007.

Non-Executive Directors' fees

A non-executive director is a member of the board of directors who does not form part of the executive management team. He or she is not an employee of the company nor affiliated with it. These individuals are custodians of the governance process and monitor the executive activity by contributing to the development strategy of the company or organisation.

The average remuneration of non-executive directors decreased drastically in 2007 by N\$ 54 437 compared to 2006. There was also a decrease in the number of non-executive directors in 2007 as companies cut costs. As a result, the number of years that a workers with a minimum wage has to work to obtain the income of a non-executive director decreased considerably from 3,7 years to 1,4 years in 2007.

Table 5: Comparison of average non-executive directors' fee to minimum wages

	2007	2006	Percentage increase
Annual average Non-Executive director	37 169	91 706	- 59,5%
Minimum wage	26 033	24 915	8,3%
Ratio: non-executive director: minimum wage	1: 1,4	1: 3,7	

Conclusion

Wage bargaining in Namibia is characterised by a high degree of consistency over the past few years. The performance of different unions is influenced by the different sectors they operate in but most unions managed to achieve increases above the inflation rate. Some unions such as NAPWU and MUN still negotiate for “across-the-board increases” which benefit higher paid workers and widen the wage gap. This results in lower paid workers getting a lower actual wage increase. On the other hand, NATAU managed to achieve higher increases for lower paid workers thus contributing to a slight decrease in the wage gap. This strategy should be considered by other trade unions as a contribution towards redistribution.

It is imperative for trade union negotiators to move away from the tradition of negotiating only for wages but to also include other benefits, which will enhance the overall well-being of workers and their families.

The most important finding of the wage bargaining report 2007 was the disproportionate increase in earnings for executive directors. Their incomes are determined outside the ambit of collective bargaining and increased by an incredible 37% during 2007. Thus while workers had to be satisfied with increases close to the inflation rate, executive directors increased their earnings handsomely. This contributed significantly to widening the country's already extreme levels of inequality. Namibia is currently the worst country in the world in terms of inequalities and such practices will further exacerbate the problem.

Trade unions will have to make the reduction of inequalities a central theme of their negotiations if the current trend is to be reversed. A continuous widening of the income gap will certainly result in severe social tensions as Namibia's elite already enjoys a living standard comparable to industrialised countries while workers and their families struggle to make ends meet. This needs to be addressed at the workplace and beyond.

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