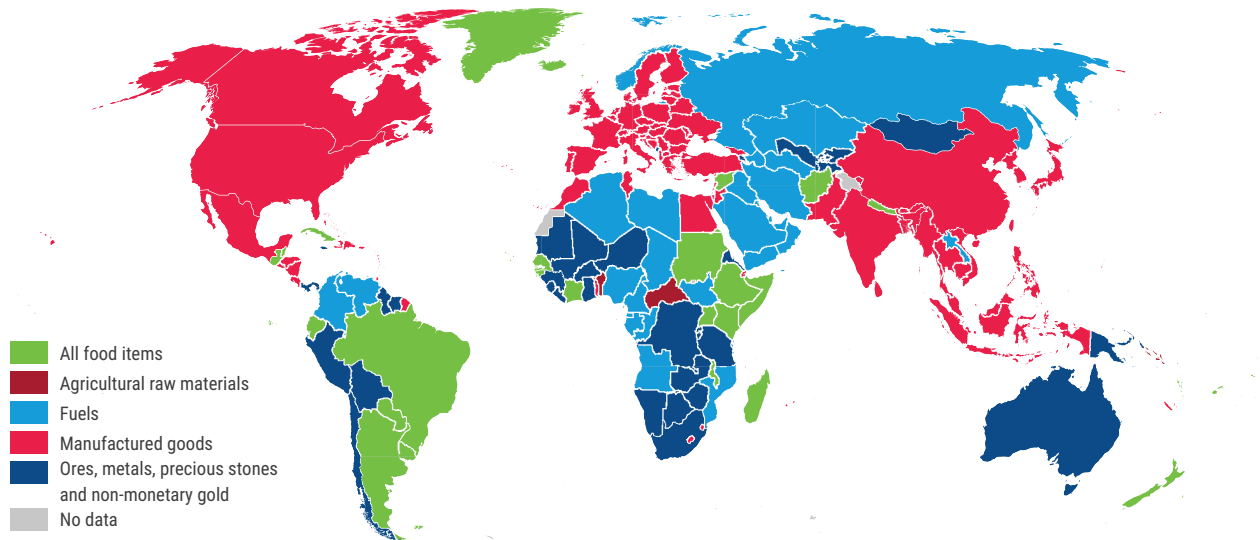


# Fact sheet #3: Trade structure by product

**Map 1 Main export products, 2021**



## Concepts and definitions

The breakdown of merchandise trade by product group is based on the entries in the customs declarations that are coded in accordance with a globally harmonized classification system, called the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). The values of the individual customs declarations have been summed up to the level of product group, error-checked and submitted to the United Nations Statistics Division for integration in the UN Comtrade database (United Nations, 2022).

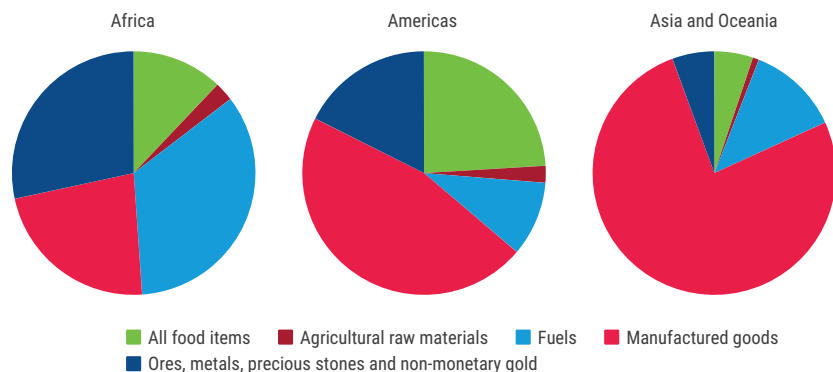
The UN Comtrade database contains product breakdowns based on the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC). These have been obtained by conversion of the raw data coded in HS and constitute the main source of the figures presented in this section. For correspondence between SITC codes and the five broad product groups presented in this section, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, annex 6.2.

## Regional specialization patterns

The supply of goods to the world market has a regional pattern. In 2021, economies in Northern and Central America, Europe and Southern, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia exported mainly manufactured goods. Economies mainly exporting fuels were located along the northern coast of South America, in Middle and Northern Africa and Western and Central Asia.

In Africa, primary goods accounted for 77 per cent of merchandise exports in 2021. Fuels made up 44 per cent. Developing Asia and Oceania relied much less on primary goods exports (24 per cent) than developing economies in Africa and the Americas. Among the three developing regions, developing America recorded the largest proportion of food exports (24 per cent), and developing Asia and Oceania the lowest (5 per cent).

**Figure 1 Export structure of developing economies by product group, 2021**  
(Percentage)



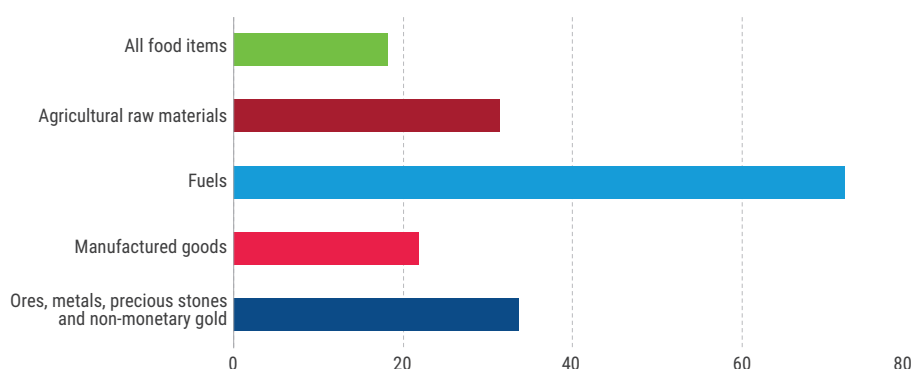
Note: Non-allocated products are not considered.



### Trade rebound in all product groups

The global rebound of merchandise trade in 2021 (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, section 1.1) was intensely driven by the surge in fuels trade. Fuels exports increased sharply, by 72 per cent. Exports of ores, metals, precious stones, and non-monetary gold grew by 34 per cent and exports of agricultural raw materials increased by 32 per cent. Exports of food grew by 18 per cent, just behind the 22 per cent growth of manufactured goods.

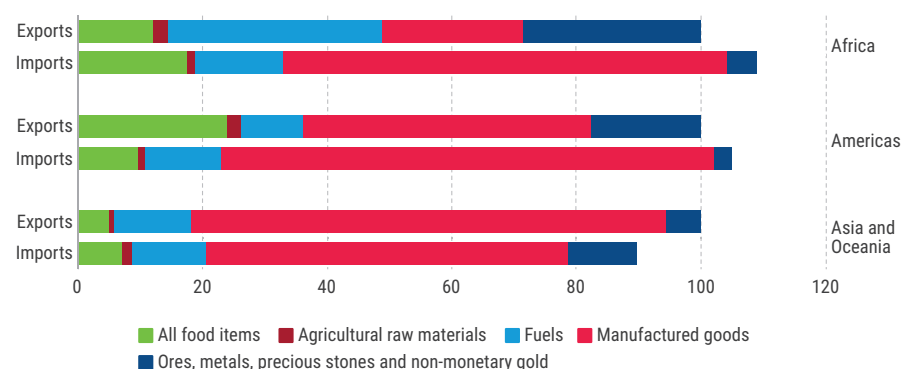
**Figure 2 Annual growth rate of exports by product group, 2021**  
(Percentage)



### What do developing regions trade with others?

In 2021, developing economies in Asia and Oceania recorded a merchandise trade surplus of 10 per cent driven by high exports of manufactured goods. Africa's high imports of manufactured products were only partly offset by surpluses in fuel and in ores, metals, precious stones, and monetary gold. Overall, a nine per cent trade deficit remained. In developing economies of the Americas, positive trade balances in food, in agricultural raw materials, and in ores, metals, precious stones, and monetary gold were not enough to offset a negative trade balance in manufacturing. Five per cent trade deficit persisted.

**Figure 3 Developing economies' extra-trade structure, 2021**  
(Percentage of exports)



Note: Non-allocated products are not considered.

For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, annex 6.4

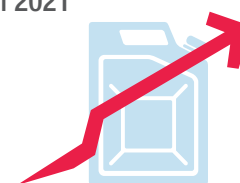
**Manufactures exporters**  
mostly found in



**77% of Africa's**  
merchandise exports  
are **primary goods**



**World fuels trade**  
grew by **72%**  
in 2021



In 2021  
**Africa imported**  
**3 times more**  
**manufactured**  
**goods than it exported**





**Table 1 Exports by product group, origin and destination, 2021**  
(Millions of United States dollars)

All food items

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
<b>World</b>	<b>1 885 346</b> (100)	<b>1 105 648</b> (59)	<b>777 492</b> (41)	<b>103 195</b> (5)	<b>108 712</b> (6)	<b>565 585</b> (30)
Developed economies	1 126 352 (100)	794 348 (71)	330 293 (29)	43 534 (4)	58 958 (5)	227 801 (20)
Developing economies	758 994 (100)	311 300 (41)	447 199 (59)	59 662 (8)	49 753 (7)	337 784 (45)
Developing economies: Africa	67 389 (100)	32 943 (49)	34 333 (51)	15 803 (23)	547 (1)	17 983 (27)
Developing economies: Americas	274 823 (100)	130 751 (48)	143 773 (52)	11 808 (4)	42 184 (15)	89 781 (33)
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	416 783 (100)	147 606 (35)	269 094 (65)	32 051 (8)	7 022 (2)	230 020 (55)

Note: Percentage of exports to the whole world in parentheses.

Agricultural raw materials

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
<b>World</b>	<b>305 701</b> (100)	<b>162 378</b> (53)	<b>142 484</b> (47)	<b>7 874</b> (3)	<b>11 787</b> (4)	<b>122 824</b> (40)
Developed economies	198 206 (100)	125 661 (63)	71 783 (36)	4 778 (2)	7 898 (4)	59 107 (30)
Developing economies	107 495 (100)	36 717 (34)	70 702 (66)	3 096 (3)	3 889 (4)	63 717 (59)
Developing economies: Africa	14 154 (100)	4 321 (31)	9 832 (69)	972 (7)	103 (1)	8 756 (62)
Developing economies: Americas	25 703 (100)	11 612 (45)	14 016 (55)	184 (1)	2 078 (8)	11 754 (46)
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	67 638 (100)	20 783 (31)	46 854 (69)	1 940 (3)	1 707 (3)	43 207 (64)

Note: Percentage of exports to the whole world in parentheses.



## Fuels

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
<b>World</b>	<b>2 558 349</b> (100)	<b>1 307 033</b> (51)	<b>1 158 043</b> (45)	<b>91 587</b> (4)	<b>140 760</b> (6)	<b>925 696</b> (36)
Developed economies	1 260 976 (100)	832 455 (66)	356 178 (28)	34 293 (3)	103 236 (8)	218 649 (17)
Developing economies	1 297 373 (100)	474 578 (37)	801 865 (62)	57 294 (4)	37 524 (3)	707 047 (54)
Developing economies: Africa	191 509 (100)	93 191 (49)	97 666 (51)	13 836 (7)	4 524 (2)	79 305 (41)
Developing economies: Americas	113 469 (100)	31 621 (28)	64 593 (57)	965 (1)	23 618 (21)	40 010 (35)
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	992 395 (100)	349 766 (35)	639 605 (64)	42 492 (4)	9 382 (1)	587 731 (59)

Note: Percentage of exports to the whole world in parentheses.

## Manufactured goods

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
<b>World</b>	<b>15 089 007</b> (100)	<b>9 274 113</b> (61)	<b>5 804 372</b> (38)	<b>427 705</b> (3)	<b>862 657</b> (6)	<b>4 514 011</b> (30)
Developed economies	8 244 978 (100)	5 948 366 (72)	2 288 374 (28)	160 676 (2)	472 175 (6)	1 655 523 (20)
Developing economies	6 844 029 (100)	3 325 747 (49)	3 515 999 (51)	267 029 (4)	390 482 (6)	2 858 488 (42)
Developing economies: Africa	126 863 (100)	68 118 (54)	57 847 (46)	27 510 (22)	6 135 (5)	24 202 (19)
Developing economies: Americas	527 791 (100)	422 955 (80)	103 761 (20)	2 699 (1)	84 736 (16)	16 327 (3)
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	6 189 375 (100)	2 834 673 (46)	3 354 390 (54)	236 819 (4)	299 612 (5)	2 817 959 (46)

Note: Percentage of exports to the whole world in parentheses.

## Ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
<b>World</b>	<b>1 725 949</b> (100)	<b>824 344</b> (48)	<b>888 318</b> (51)	<b>32 443</b> (2)	<b>33 428</b> (2)	<b>822 447</b> (48)
Developed economies	911 705 (100)	530 553 (58)	368 454 (40)	8 755 (1)	16 946 (2)	342 753 (38)
Developing economies	814 244 (100)	293 791 (36)	519 864 (64)	23 688 (3)	16 481 (2)	479 695 (59)
Developing economies: Africa	158 461 (100)	57 821 (36)	100 628 (64)	12 620 (8)	954 (1)	87 054 (55)
Developing economies: Americas	201 082 (100)	83 581 (42)	116 933 (58)	812 (0)	8 726 (4)	107 396 (53)
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	454 701 (100)	152 389 (34)	302 303 (66)	10 257 (2)	6 802 (1)	285 244 (63)

Note: Percentage of exports to the whole world in parentheses.