

1.3 Merchandise trade by product

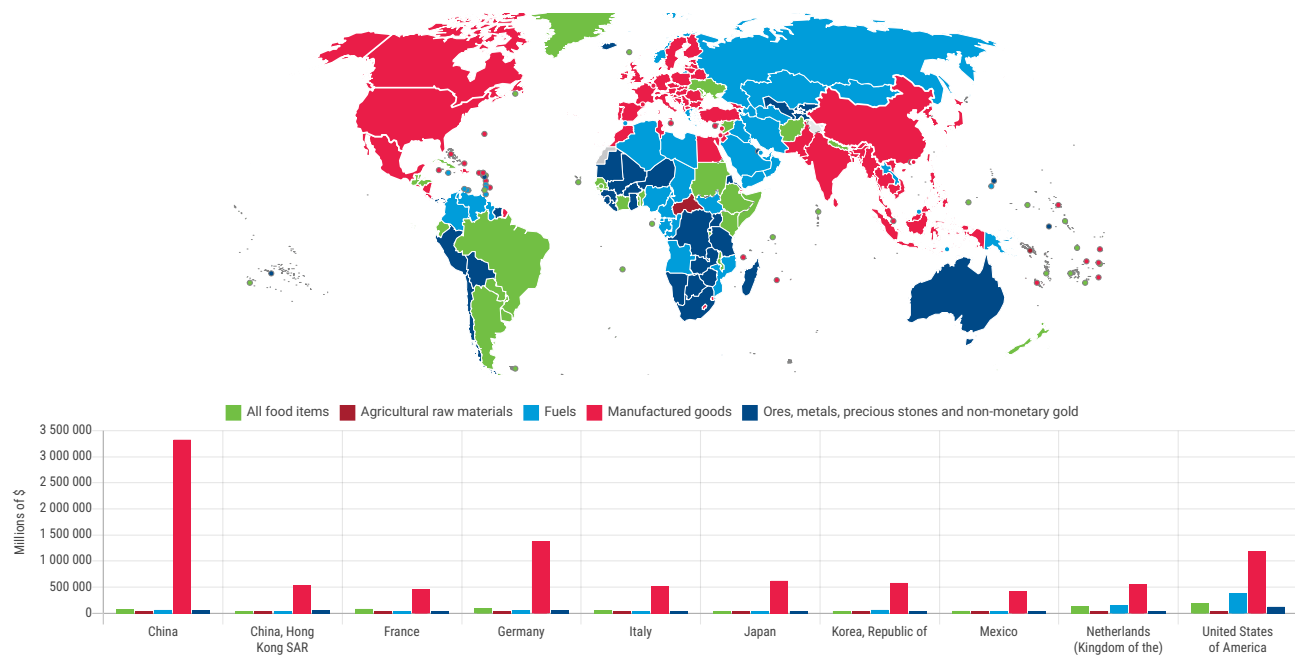
In 2022, **manufacturing exporters** mostly found in

79% of Africa's merchandise exports were **primary goods** in 2022

The value of world **fuels trade grew** by **62%** in 2022

In 2022 **Africa imported almost 4 times** as much **manufactured goods** as it exported

Map 1. Main export products, 2022



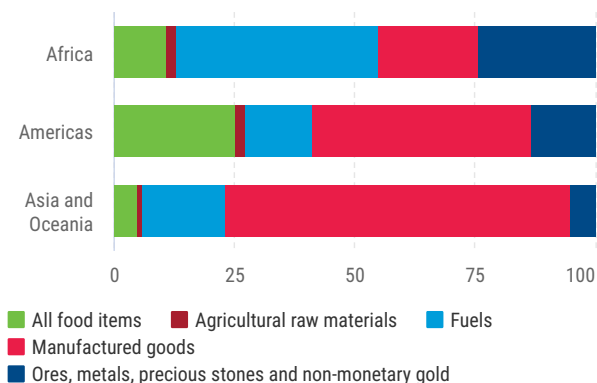
Note: Top 10 exporting economies are shown.

Regional specialization patterns

The supply of goods to the world market has a regional pattern. In 2022, economies in Northern and Central America, Europe and Southern, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia exported mainly manufactured goods. Economies primarily 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 79 per cent of merchandise exports in 2022. Fuels made up 42 per cent. Developing Asia and Oceania relied much less on primary goods exports (28 per cent) than developing economies in Africa and the Americas (54 per cent). Among the three developing regions, developing Asia and Oceania recorded the lowest proportion of food exports (5 per cent), far behind developing America (25 per cent) and developing Africa (11 per cent).

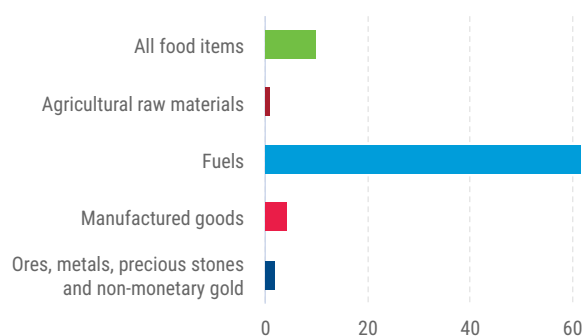
Figure 1. Export structure of developing economies by product group, 2022
(Percentage)



Note: Non-allocated products are not considered.

The uptrend continues in all product groups

Figure 2. Annual growth rate of exports by product group, 2022
(Percentage)

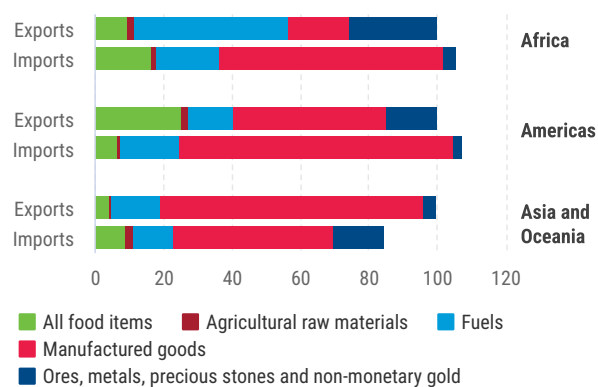


The continued upswing in the value of world merchandise trade in 2022 (see [Total merchandise trade](#)) was strongly driven by fuels. Fuels exports increased by 62 per cent, whereas exports of food grew by 10 per cent and that of manufactured goods by only 5 per cent. Exports of ores, metals, precious stones, and non-monetary gold rose by 2 per cent and agricultural raw materials exports recorded a modest increase of 1 per cent.

What do developing regions trade with others?

In 2022, developing economies in Asia and Oceania recorded a merchandise trade surplus of 15 per cent of the value of exports, driven by high exports of manufactured goods. For the developing economies of the Americas as a group, positive trade balances in food, agricultural raw materials, and ores, metals, precious stones, and non-monetary gold were not sufficient to offset a negative trade balance in manufacturing. A trade deficit of 7 per cent of the value of exports remained. In Africa, high imports of manufactured products and negative balance in food were only partly offset by surpluses in fuels, agricultural raw materials and ores, metals, precious stones, and non-monetary gold, leading to a trade deficit 6 per cent of the value of exports.

Figure 3. Developing economies' extra-trade structure, 2022
(Percentage of exports)



Note: Non-allocated products are not considered.

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, 2023).

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 [Classifications](#) page.

For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2023, annex 6.4

**Table 1. Exports by product group, origin and destination, 2022**

(Millions of United States dollars)

All food items

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
World	2 079 766 (100)	1 201 016 (58)	872 911 (42)	120 515 (6)	121 994 (6)	630 402 (30)
Developed economies	1 204 708 (100)	856 400 (71)	344 239 (29)	50 379 (4)	65 903 (5)	227 957 (19)
Developing economies	875 058 (100)	344 617 (39)	528 672 (60)	70 136 (8)	56 091 (6)	402 445 (46)
Africa	73 493 (100)	34 244 (47)	39 246 (53)	17 907 (24)	644 (1)	20 695 (28)
Americas	336 619 (100)	151 461 (45)	183 520 (55)	16 418 (5)	48 452 (14)	118 650 (35)
Asia and Oceania	464 947 (100)	158 912 (34)	305 906 (66)	35 811 (8)	6 995 (2)	263 099 (57)

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

Agricultural raw materials

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
World	311 950 (100)	167 717 (54)	143 477 (46)	8 309 (3)	13 411 (4)	121 756 (39)
Developed economies	199 420 (100)	126 463 (63)	72 810 (37)	4 941 (2)	9 027 (5)	58 842 (30)
Developing economies	112 531 (100)	41 254 (37)	70 667 (63)	3 368 (3)	4 385 (4)	62 915 (56)
Africa	13 489 (100)	4 424 (33)	9 065 (67)	1 216 (9)	80 (1)	7 769 (58)
Americas	29 698 (100)	13 627 (46)	15 463 (52)	220 (1)	2 363 (8)	12 880 (43)
Asia and Oceania	69 344 (100)	23 203 (33)	46 140 (67)	1 933 (3)	1 942 (3)	42 265 (61)

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

Fuels

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
World	4 025 018 (100)	2 229 412 (55)	1 719 001 (43)	154 998 (4)	224 921 (6)	1 339 082 (33)
Developed economies	1 998 766 (100)	1 444 086 (72)	508 768 (25)	57 525 (3)	161 856 (8)	289 387 (14)
Developing economies	2 026 252 (100)	785 325 (39)	1 210 233 (60)	97 473 (5)	63 065 (3)	1 049 695 (52)
Africa	277 958 (100)	147 407 (53)	128 425 (46)	20 509 (7)	6 378 (2)	101 538 (37)
Americas	183 781 (100)	69 770 (38)	88 547 (48)	1 827 (1)	37 966 (21)	48 753 (27)
Asia and Oceania	1 564 512 (100)	568 148 (36)	993 261 (63)	75 137 (5)	18 720 (1)	899 404 (57)

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

Manufactured goods

Origin	Destination					
	World	Developed economies	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia and Oceania
World	15 855 080 (100)	9 741 265 (61)	6 100 823 (38)	456 742 (3)	956 274 (6)	4 687 807 (30)
Developed economies	8 613 204 (100)	6 223 605 (72)	2 378 559 (28)	165 922 (2)	527 431 (6)	1 685 206 (20)
Developing economies	7 241 876 (100)	3 517 659 (49)	3 722 264 (51)	290 821 (4)	428 843 (6)	3 002 600 (41)
Africa	138 967 (100)	65 336 (47)	73 616 (53)	39 587 (28)	7 572 (5)	26 457 (19)
Americas	608 705 (100)	477 886 (79)	129 874 (21)	3 630 (1)	100 528 (17)	25 717 (4)
Asia and Oceania	6 494 204 (100)	2 974 437 (46)	3 518 773 (54)	247 604 (4)	320 743 (5)	2 950 427 (45)

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
World	1 778 231 (100)	844 118 (47)	930 459 (52)	33 278 (2)	35 312 (2)	861 869 (48)
Developed economies	980 979 (100)	554 400 (57)	422 979 (43)	9 109 (1)	17 678 (2)	396 192 (40)
Developing economies	797 252 (100)	289 718 (36)	507 480 (64)	24 168 (3)	17 634 (2)	465 677 (58)
Africa	158 994 (100)	58 455 (37)	100 538 (63)	11 929 (8)	993 (1)	87 615 (55)
Americas	173 604 (100)	71 978 (41)	101 608 (59)	945 (1)	8 063 (5)	92 601 (53)
Asia and Oceania	464 654 (100)	159 285 (34)	305 334 (66)	11 294 (2)	8 578 (2)	285 461 (61)

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