

DATA: CHINA-AFRICA TRADE



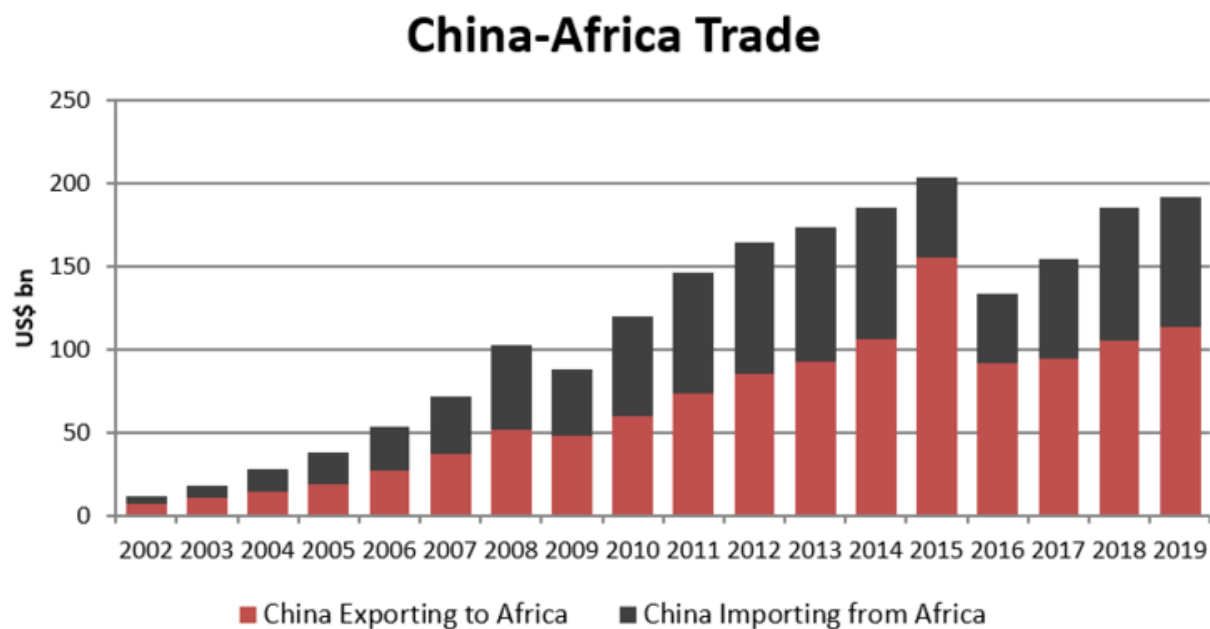
1. CHINA-AFRICA BILATERAL TRADE DATA OVERVIEW

China-Africa bilateral trade has been steadily increasing for the past 16 years. However, weak commodity prices since 2014 have greatly impacted the value of African exports to China, even while Chinese exports to Africa remained steady. Our data includes North Africa.

The value of China-Africa trade in 2019 was \$192 bn, up from \$185 bn in 2018.

In 2019, the largest exporter to China from Africa was Angola, followed by South Africa and The Republic of Congo.

In 2019, Nigeria was the largest buyer of Chinese goods, followed by South Africa and Egypt.



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Source: UN Comtrade

CHINA★AFRICA
RESEARCH INITIATIVE


JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of ADVANCED
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

2. CARI TRADE DATA COMPILATION

While U. N. Comtrade and Chinese government sources do not report the exact same trade figures, the two sources are very close. For consistency, we provided all Comtrade data for users to download. We also included U.S. trade with Africa for comparison. CARI only provides data as reported by the Chinese government in order to maintain consistency. Trade reports from African governments are less consistent in both their frequency and reporting standards.*

3. DATA

3.1 Official data

The General Administration of Customs of the PRC compiles and reports quarterly and annual bilateral trade statistics on their [website](#). The Customs is the first to report the most updated trade data, and usually does so in both English and Chinese. However, there are several caveats to using their data. First of all, while the figures reported are denominated in US\$, they are either in ten thousands of US\$ or hundreds of thousands of US\$ (wan or yi), instead of the more familiar millions. Secondly, the reports are only available in PDF instead of data-friendly formats such as comma separated values file. Finally, the China Customs' data only goes back 2 years. China Statistical Yearbook (CSY) is another source for trade data. CSY receives their information from the China Customs, and their records go back further. Since it is published annually, there is a one year lag in their data, and their data cannot be retroactively updated. Though most of their files are available for download in Excel, the formats of the datasets vary from year to year, including the order of countries.

U.N. Comtrade's trade data are based on reports made by individual countries or downloaded by Comtrade from official sources. Comtrade data closely matches that of China Statistical Yearbooks and China Customs. Comtrade data is continuously updated.

3.2 Other data sources

Currently there are no other sources that are more reliable than those provided by the Chinese government and the U. N.

*Note: Figures for Chinese imports from South Africa as reported by the Chinese government are much larger than those reported by the South African government. It is believed that this disparity is caused by differences in valuing mineral goods. For Chinese imports from South Africa, CARI uses figures as reported by the South African government. Please be aware of this if you are using the dataset for research purposes, and please [contact us](#) if you have any questions.