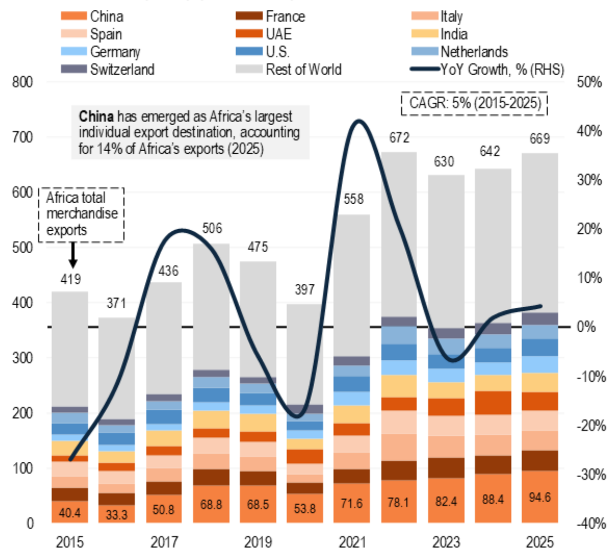
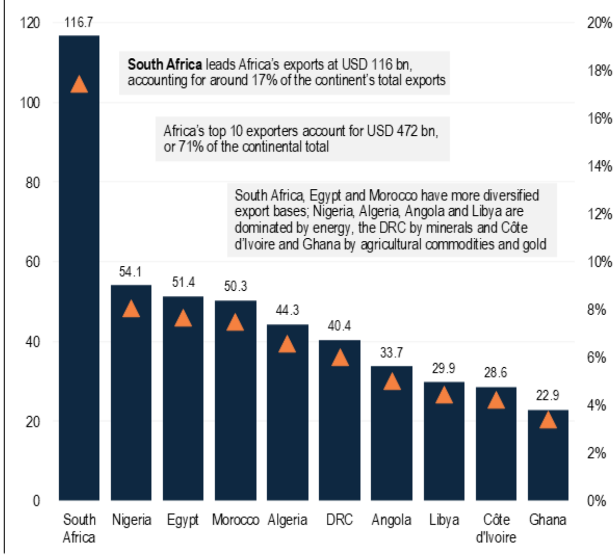
Africa's Export Growth Accelerates as China's Role Continues to Expand

Africa's exports reached a new high in 2025, but the export base remains highly concentrated, and China has become the largest single destination.

Africa Merchandise Exports: Top 10 Destinations, USD bn, and YoY Growth, % (RHS) (2015-2025)



Top 10 African Merchandise Exporters, USD bn, and Share of Africa Total, % (RHS) (2025)



Source: Trade Map, ANDAMAN PARTNERS Analysis

Africa's merchandise exports continued to expand in 2025, rising 4% to a new high of USD 669 billion and extending a longer-term increase of around 5% annually since 2015.

China has become increasingly important within this growth: African exports to China reached USD 94.6 billion in 2025, up 7% from USD 88.4 billion in 2024 and more than double their 2015 level, making China the continent's largest individual export destination with a 14% share.

Africa's export base nevertheless remains highly concentrated. The continent's ten largest exporters generated USD 472 billion in exports in 2025, equivalent to 71% of the continent's total merchandise exports. South Africa alone accounted for USD 116.7 billion, or 17% of the continental total, while Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco each exported more than USD 50 billion. The composition also remains uneven: South Africa, Egypt and Morocco have relatively diversified export bases, while several other major exporters remain heavily concentrated in energy, minerals or agricultural commodities.

Early 2026 data point to continued momentum, particularly in trade with China. According to China's General Administration of Customs, China-Africa trade reached a record of approximately USD 208 billion in H1 2026. African exports to China also accelerated following the expansion of zero-tariff access in May, reaching USD 28.6 billion in May-June alone, up 23.5% year-on-year.

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