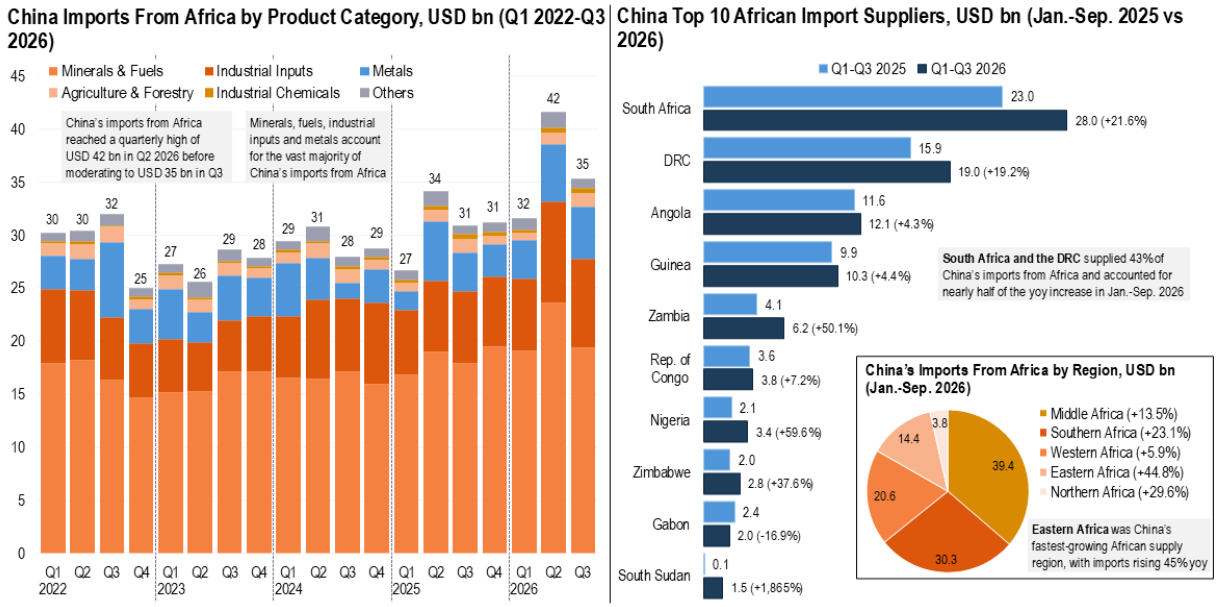
China's Imports from Africa Are Rising, Led by South Africa and the DRC

China's imports from Africa rose 18% YoY to USD 109 billion in the first nine months of 2026, with minerals, fuels, industrial inputs and metals continuing to dominate trade



Note: African regions follow the UN M49 geographical classification. Growth rates are calculated using unrounded values. Source: ITC Trade Map, UN Comtrade, China Customs, ANDAMAN PARTNERS Analysis

China is buying more from Africa. In the first nine months of 2026, Chinese imports from the continent reached USD 109 billion, up 18% from the same period in 2025.

Africa remains an important supplier of the raw materials that underpin China's industrial economy, with minerals, fuels, industrial inputs and metals accounting for the vast majority of imports.

South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are central to this trading relationship. Together, they supplied China with USD 47 billion in goods and accounted for nearly half of the increase in Chinese imports from Africa.

Yet growth is also coming from elsewhere on the continent. China's imports from Zambia and Nigeria increased by around 50% and 60%, respectively, while Eastern Africa recorded the fastest regional growth at 45%.

The figures illustrate both the importance of African resources to China's industrial economy and the growing commercial opportunities for African suppliers in the Chinese market.

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