The Pakistan Business Council
FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH
(A Company set up under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance 1984)

PAKISTAN'S TRADE WITH AFRICA

A comparative with India

March 2026

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The Pakistan Business Council:
An Overview

The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) is a research-based business advocacy platform established in 2005. It is now supported by over 100 private sector local and multinational businesses with significant investment in, and long-term commitment to sustainable growth of the country. They come from 14 countries, have leading roles in 17 major sectors of the formal economy, generate 40% of annual exports, contribute a third of Pakistan's total tax revenues and employ three million. Their combined sales represent every 6th Rupee of Pakistan's GDP.

PBC's major objectives are to advocate polices that lead to creation of jobs, value-added exports and reduction in import reliance through improved competitiveness of manufacturing, services and the agriculture sectors. It also promotes formalization of the economy.

PBC's over-arching theme, "Make-in-Pakistan" consists of three pillars: "Grow More/Grow Better", "Make More/Make Better" and "Serve More/Serve Better." Its evidence-based advocacy is backed by over a hundred studies to date, through its full-time research team, supplemented by collaborative research with renowned industry experts and economists. Through its Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business (CERB), PBC works to build capacity and capability of businesses beyond its membership, to adopt high environmental, social and governance standards. PBC holds conferences, seminars and webinars to facilitate the flow of relevant information to all stakeholders in order to help create an informed view on the major issues faced by Pakistan. Through its presence in Islamabad and Karachi, it works closely with relevant government departments, ministries, regulators and institutions, as well as other stakeholders including professional bodies, to develop consensus on major issues impacting the economy.

PBC is a pan-sectoral, not-for-profit, Section 42 entity. It is not a trade body; therefore, it does not advocate for any specific business sector. Rather, its key advocacy thrust is on easing barriers that thwart competitiveness of businesses in Pakistan.

Further information on the PBC is available on: www.pbc.org.pk.

The PBC's Founding Objectives

- To provide for the formation and exchange of views on any question connected with the conduct of business in and from Pakistan.

- To conduct, organize, set up, administer and manage campaigns, surveys, focus groups, workshops, seminars and fieldwork for carrying out research and raising awareness in regard to matters affecting businesses in Pakistan.

- To acquire, collect, compile, analyze, publish and provide statistics, data analysis and other information relating to businesses of any kind, nature or description and on opportunities for such businesses within and outside Pakistan.

- To promote and facilitate the integration of businesses in Pakistan into the World economy and to encourage in the development and growth of Pakistani multinationals.

- To interact with governments in the economic development of Pakistan and to facilitate, foster and further the economic, social and human resource development of Pakistan.

The PBC Member Companies

ABACUS YOUR TRANSFORMATION PARTNER	Abbott A Promise for Life	AGP we value life	AIRLINK
AkzoNobel	alBaraka Bank	alkaram	AlliedBank
AMRELI STEELS Building for Life	ARCHROMA LIFE ENHANCED	Artistic Milliners DENIM COMPANY OF THE FUTURE	Atlas
Bank Alfalah		Bata	Beaconhouse
Bosch		CCL	CENTRAL DEPOSITORY COMPANY
CHANGAN AUTO	CHERAT CEMENT	CHUBB	Coca-Cola
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE	Dalda	Daraz	Dawlance
DESCON	DH Partners	EBM	efu GENERAL
EMAAR PAKISTAN	engro holdings	Excel Group	Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited
faysalbank	FEROZSONS LABORATORIES LIMITED	FMC An Agricultural Sciences Company	FORWARD
FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited	GATRON	Getz pharma	gsk do more feel better live longer
GulAhmed	HBL	Hilton PHARMA	INTERLOOP
International Industries Ltd.	ISMAIL INDUSTRIES LIMITED	Jazz	JS BANK

Jubilee GENERAL INSURANCE

K&N's

KE

KHAADI

LIBERTY

LIPTON Teas and Infusions

LOTTE

LUCKY CEMENT

MACPAC FILMS ltd.

MAHMOOD GROUP

Martin Dow

MASOOD ROOMI

mayfair The little joys of life

MEGA MEGA CONGLOMERATE

National FOODS SINCE 1970

NAVEENA GROUP

Nestlé Good food, Good life

NIMIR

OLP

Packages Limited

Pakistan Oxygen

PEPSICO

PSL PAKISTAN SERVICES LTD.

PSX PAKISTAN STOCK EXCHANGE LIMITED

reckitt

SAIF GROUP

SAP

Sapphire

Servis

Shan

SICPA

SIEMENS

Soneri Bank

SOORTY

SPEL Synthetic Products Enterprises Limited

Standard Chartered

systems

TAPAL

TCS WE MOVE YOU

Tetra Pak PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD

TG

TOYOTA INDUS MOTOR COMPANY LTD.

TPL

TTE Transsion Tecno Electronics

Tufail Chemical Industries Ltd.

UBL where you come first

Unilever

Young's

The PBC Affiliates

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Acronyms

ITC	International Trade Centre
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
HS	Harmonized System of Tariff Nomenclature
USD	United States Dollar
Exp	Export
Imp	Import
AU	African Union
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HDI	Human Development Index
REE	Rare Earth Elements
PGM	Platinum Group Metals
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
SAATM	Single African Air Transport Market
PAPSS	Pan-African Payments and Settlements System
IAFS	India Africa Forum Summit
LDC	Least Developed Country
LOC	Lines of Credit
PTAP	Pakistan Technical Assistance Program
ITEC	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
EAC	East African Community
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
SADC	South African Development Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
API	Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
FDA	Federal Drug Authority
LME	London Metal Exchange
LAPSSET	Lamu Port South – Sudan Ethiopia Transport
SCM	Supplementary Cementitious Materials
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technology
ICIEC	Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Africa represents one of the most consequential emerging economic frontiers of the 21st century. With 55 recognized countries, a population exceeding 1.5 billion, expanding urbanization, rising consumption patterns and abundant natural resources, the continent has increasingly attracted strategic and commercial engagement from global and regional powers. This report examines Africa's economic profile, compares Pakistan and India's diplomatic and trade engagements with the continent, analyses current trade structures, and identifies sectors with realistic export potential for Pakistan.

The analysis reveals that while Africa offers significant commercial opportunities, Pakistan's engagement remains limited in scale, concentrated in a narrow export basket, and comparatively less institutionalized than India's. India's broader and more structured approach demonstrates that sustained diplomatic engagement, export financing, and sectoral diversification are central to meaningful economic integration with African markets.

Africa's Economic Profile and Strategic Importance

Africa is characterized by a 1.5 billion strong population, growing trade volumes, and increasing integration into global markets. The continent's population growth rate exceeds 2%, significantly outpacing both India and Pakistan.

While there is substantial heterogeneity across regions, the distinction between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly significant. North African economies generally exhibit higher per capita incomes and stronger human development indicators, while Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the bulk of the continent's population and potential for trade expansion. Major economies such as South Africa, Egypt, Algeria and Nigeria serve as regional anchors, attracting substantial foreign direct investment and accounting for large shares of trade flows.

Africa's economic structure reflects a combination of primary resource extraction and expanding services and industrial sectors. The continent holds approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including critical minerals essential for modern technologies. Simultaneously, rising urbanization and infrastructure development are driving demand for manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, construction materials and consumer products.

The continent is, additionally, characterized by its many regional economic blocs, many with overlapping memberships and varying degrees of integration and operationalization.

Diplomatic and Economic Engagement: Pakistan vs India

A central finding of the report is the disparity between Pakistan and India in the depth and breadth of engagement with Africa. While both countries share historical linkages with parts of the continent, India has institutionalized its Africa outreach through sustained high-level diplomacy, concessional credit lines, development cooperation initiatives and extensive private-sector participation.

India operates a high number of diplomatic missions, institutionalizes continent-wide cooperation via the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), offers reduced tariffs and credit lines to African LDCs, trains African students in Indian universities and oversees cultural centres in multiple African countries.

Pakistan, by contrast, has historically maintained more limited diplomatic coverage and commercial outreach. Although recent initiatives under the “Look Africa” and “Engage Africa” frameworks indicate renewed interest, the scale of engagement remains modest. Pakistan’s aggregate trade with Africa is significantly smaller than India’s, reflecting both structural economic differences and institutional limitations.

Current Trade Patterns and Structural Imbalances

Pakistan’s trade with Africa has grown in recent years, with exports increasing at a compound annual growth rate of 11.3% since 2020. However, export structure reveals significant concentration. 61.9% of Pakistan’s exports to Africa consist of semi- or wholly-milled rice, broken rice and worn clothing. Together, these categories account for a disproportionate share of total export value.

This concentration exposes Pakistan to volatility stemming from agricultural cycles and commodity price fluctuations. It also indicates limited integration into higher value-added manufacturing segments. In contrast, India’s export profile to Africa is markedly diversified. Its leading exports include refined petroleum products, motor vehicles, construction machinery, pharmaceuticals, vaccines and electronics, reflecting a broader industrial base and greater capacity to meet Africa’s evolving consumption and industrial needs.

Another structural issue is the mismatch between Pakistan’s global export strengths and African import preferences. While textiles form a dominant share of Pakistan’s global exports, Africa does not represent a particularly large market for these categories. India’s export mix, on the other hand, aligns more closely with African demand for fuels, transport equipment, machinery and pharmaceuticals.

Geographically, Pakistan’s export footprint in Africa remains limited, with insufficient penetration into wealthier and more industrialized markets in North Africa and major sub-Saharan economies. India has achieved stronger presence in markets such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, reflecting sustained commercial engagement and regulatory adaptation.

Sectoral Potential and Strategic Opportunities

The report identifies several sectors where Pakistan has the potential, whether due to favourable demand-side tailwinds or existing production capacities, to meaningfully scale up exports and penetrate new markets in the medium and long terms.

Pharmaceuticals

Africa’s growing disease burden, population expansion and underdeveloped local manufacturing capacity generate substantial demand for generic pharmaceuticals with market demand slated to reach 9,290.0 USD Mn by 2030. Pakistan possesses manufacturing capabilities in generic medicines and can leverage its existing production base along with regulatory harmonization, quality certifications and sustained marketing efforts to compete effectively with established suppliers, particularly India.

Plastics and Manufactured Goods

Industrial expansion and urbanization drive demand for plastics and intermediate goods, with the continent importing 28,349.3 USD Mn worth of plastics in 2024. Pakistan’s domestic production capacity provides scope for expanding exports, considering the relative absence of India from this sector, provided cost competitiveness and logistical efficiency are improved.

Copper and Articles of Copper

Africa's copper imports have grown steadily, rising to 5,731.4 USD Mn in 2024, particularly in refined copper cathodes and wires. Although Pakistan's current presence in this segment is negligible, expected investments in mining, extraction and logistics combined with additional smelter and electro-refining facilities could position the country to capture emerging demand linked to infrastructure and renewable energy development.

Livestock and Meat

Africa's rising meat consumption presents opportunities in livestock, frozen and value-added meat products, with the continent importing 1,647.5 USD Mn worth of livestock and 4,963.7 USD Mn worth of meat in 2024. Pakistan's experience with halal exports to the Gulf and expanding cold-chain investments create potential entry points pending compliance with diverse sanitary and veterinary standards.

Cement and Clinker

Rapid urbanization and infrastructure projects across the continent sustain demand for cement and clinker, with the continent importing 1,239.5 USD Mn worth of cement and 1,454.9 USD Mn worth of clinker in 2024. Pakistan has recorded growth in cement and clinker exports to Africa, with dispatches exceeding 100 USD Mn in 2024, and holds a measurable but modest market share. Further strengthening competitiveness would entail enhancing port mechanization and reducing freight costs.

Surgical Instruments

Pakistan's established surgical instruments sector offers potential, though exports to Africa only constituted 3.6% of global sales for Pakistan. Pakistan has a strong case for its exports in the North, South and East African markets pending improvements in domestic logistics, direct shipping and improved brand marketing.

Rice

Rice exports have performed strongly, benefiting from competitive pricing and regional demand, with exports to Africa surging to 942.6 USD Mn in 2024. Much of this increase was attributed to various partial export controls and bans levied by India since late 2022. With much of these restrictions removed in late 2024, Pakistan's rice exports to the continent have reduced since then. However, with inroads in the African market already made, Pakistan has significant potential for ramping up exports, contingent on reduced costs.

Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the report, stakeholders represented by appointed trade officers/attaches, exporters and experts with insight in the African space were interviewed regarding the opportunities and challenges faced by Pakistan in the African market and their insights are included in the study.

- Orient private sector interest towards Africa by sponsoring African delegations to build B2B rapport and offer diversity and professional conduct training sessions for Pakistani exporters.

- Reduce transport costs and times by expediting direct shipping routes between Karachi and Mombasa and Djibouti, upgrading port mechanization and rationalizing port tariffs in line with regional peers.

- Bolster commercial and diplomatic presence in the country by intensifying diplomatic engagements, participating in African-delegate-attended trade fairs and pursuing joint venture in domains of Pakistani expertise.

- Improve trade financing by signing re-insurance treaties between EXIM Pakistan and global re-insurers and expanding product offerings to include buyer's credit, working capital finance and sector specific products.

- Improve business mobility by pursuing G2G cooperation to introduce e-Visa facilities for exporters and investors, expanding diplomatic missions and conducting feasibility studies for direct flights between underserved destinations.

- Prioritize the resolution of non-tariff barriers including logistics, business networking, trade financing, mobility restrictions, and diplomatic and commercial presence over negotiating trade pacts solely for tariff relief.

- Improve bilateral business prominence and advocacy by establishing joint business councils in un-served countries and re-activating dormant councils.

Background

Background

Africa is regarded as an attractive emerging market and has become a key ground for foreign powers looking to expand economic and political influence in the continent. Recent years have seen China, the US, Türkiye, Japan and the European Union attempt to establish diplomatic and economic influence in the continent. The interest has arisen due to Africa's abundant natural resources encompassing critical minerals and arable land, a large growing population, a rising middle class and strategic location along the world's trade routes.

South Asian nations have long had strategic and economic interests in Africa. Due to interactions during the colonial era and the Indian Ocean trade routes, Pakistan and India have had historical ties to Africa. Early economic and cultural ties were formed in East and Southern Africa by Indian traders. Since gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan has maintained diplomatic and commercial ties with African countries, particularly those with Muslim majority populations.

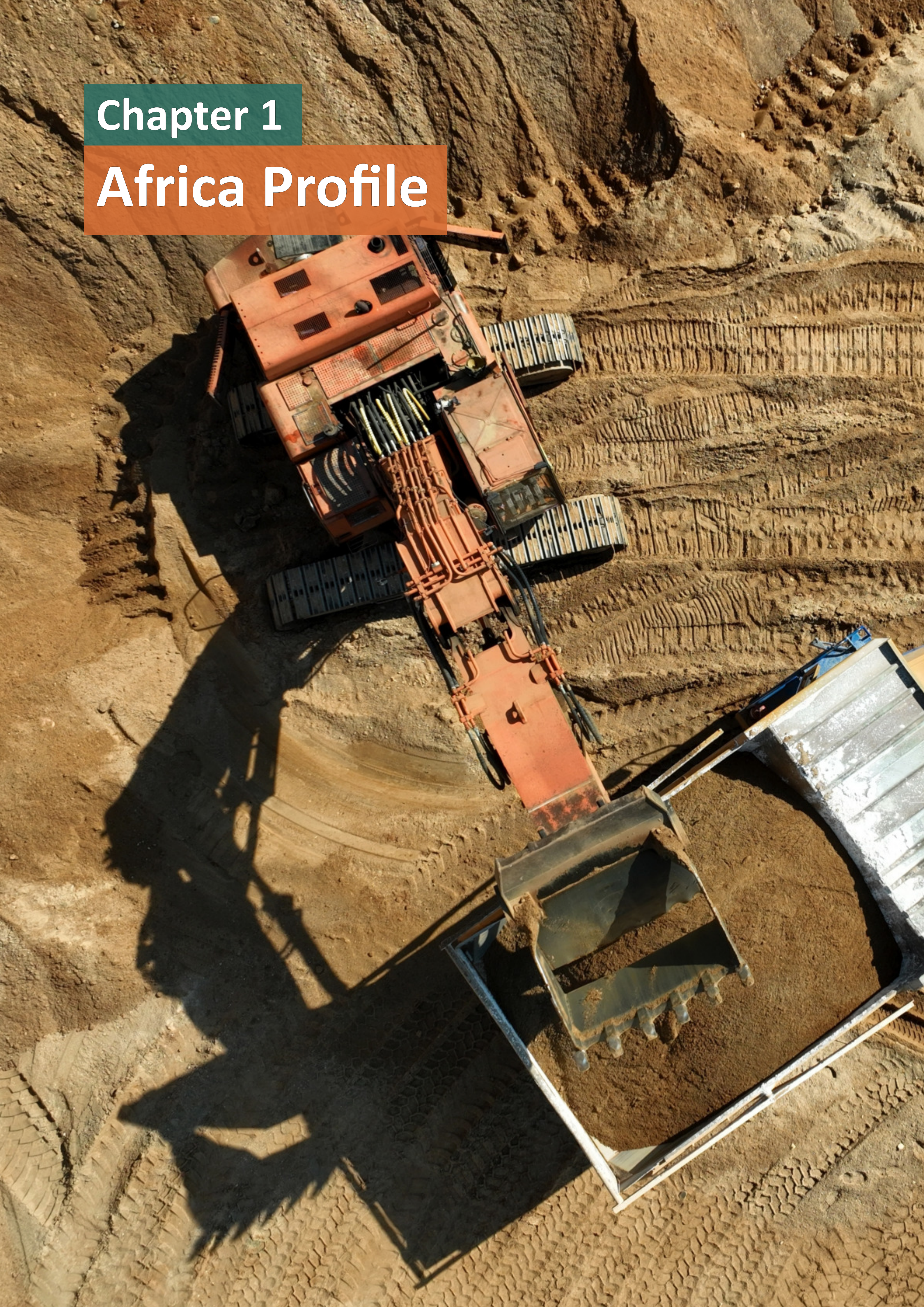
In recent years, Pakistan has sought to invigorate its relationship with Africa, launching the "Look Africa" policy in 2017, which was later subsumed by the broader "Engage Africa" policy. Recent steps taken to engage the continent include the establishment of new consulates, posting of commercial consulars, trade development conferences, and the Africa Fund. On the other hand, India's engagements with Africa have encompassed a variety of domains including diplomatic missions, targeted investments in key sectors such as energy and mining, extending lines of credit, transfer of technology and expertise and joint ventures.

When compared with India's engagement with Africa, Pakistan's relationship is more recent, less institutionalized, and far less significant when it comes to trade and commerce. This is reflected in the numbers: for example, Pakistan's aggregate trade with Africa from 2020 to 2024 was about 15 times smaller than India's aggregate trade with Africa during the same period. This is partly due to India's inherent endowments such as its large economy, active diaspora and deep historical linkages; however, other factors relating to strategy and diplomacy have undoubtedly contributed to the disparity in the two countries' relationship with the continent.

What is clear is that Africa represents a significant well of untapped potential that is worth investing in, with countries, including Pakistan, recognising the economic and geostrategic opportunities in the continent. The question now concerns the most effective way to seize those opportunities. This report will serve as a comparative analysis between Pakistan and India's diplomatic, commercial and trade relationships with Africa and serve to highlight those aspects of India's strategy that Pakistan can emulate in deepening its engagement with the continent in all domains.

Chapter 1

Africa Profile



1. Africa Profile

Figure 1: The continent of Africa

The African continent is the world's second largest continent in terms of both population and land area. An emerging market, it is characterized by its young population, abundant natural resources including hydrocarbons and minerals, perceptions of poverty, conflicts and corruption and potential for growth. This section will include a broad overview of the general economic, geopolitical and demographic dimensions of the continent.

The table below lists some key attributes for the continent & compares them with both Pakistan and India:

Table 1: Africa indicators in comparison to Pakistan & India

Social Indicators	Africa	India	Pakistan
Population (2024)	1.5 billion	1.4 billion	243.5 million
Population Growth rate (%)	2.27%	0.88%	1.55%
Age Dependency Ratio (Proportion of Children & Elderly to Working Pop.) (2024) *	0.75	0.46	0.68
Infant Mortality Rate	44**	23	50
Economic Indicators	**Africa**	**India**	**Pakistan**
GDP (USD Current Prices)	2.78 trillion	3.91 trillion	0.37 trillion
GDP per capita (USD Current Prices)	1.94 thousand	2.71 thousand	1.58 thousand
Real GDP Growth (Annual % change)	3.2%	6.5%	2.5%
Goods Imported (USD)	695.9 billion	702.8 billion	56.5 billion
Goods Exported (USD)	610.9 billion	441.7 billion	32.5 billion
FDI inflows (USD)	97.0 billion	27.6 billion	2.6 billion
FDI outflows (USD)	2.4 billion	23.8 billion	0.15 billion

*The ratio of dependents for Africa, India & Pakistan are largely driven up by the large proportion of children in their respective populations.
**The rate shown is for sub-Saharan Africa specifically

The table above characterizes the African economy by its emphasis on trade, holding a higher trade-to-GDP ratio than both India and Pakistan, and its status as an investment friendly market, boasting higher FDI inflows per capita than both India and Pakistan. These attributes, along with a population growth rate exceeding 2%, underscore the potential of the continent.

There is significant economic and developmental heterogeneity between various African countries and regions, with North African countries generally better off than sub-Saharan economies.

The table below lists some key statistics for the African economies:

Table 2: Economies in Africa (USD Mn)

Economy	2024 GDP	2024 GDP Growth Rate (%)	2024 Imports	2024 Exports	Population (Thousands)	FDI Inflow	FDI Outflow
Africa	2,868,265.6	2.9%	725,748.0	627,049.0	1,515,141	97,032.3	2,447.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	2,012,214.6	3.3%	469,785.0	436,977.0	1,243,010	-	-
North Africa	856,051.1	2.0%	255,963.0	190,072.0	272,131	-	-
South Africa	397,157.3	0.6%	123,469.0	110,076.0	64,007	2,469.4	-1,274.6
Egypt	308,294.0	3.0%	86,333.0	42,137.0	116,538	46,578.0	508.0

1. https://2024-wpds.prb.org/
2. https://www.statista.com/
3. https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.PopDependency
4. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN
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Economy	2024 GDP	2024 GDP Growth Rate (%)	2024 Imports	2024 Exports	Population (Thousands)	FDI Inflow	FDI Outflow
Algeria	265,597.0	3.8%	46,100.0	49,580.0	46,814	1,438.8	53.5
Nigeria	187,640.0	3.0%	40,907.0	52,933.0	232,679	1,080.3	- 408.0
Morocco	154,617.1	2.7%	75,116.0	45,039.0	38,081	1,638.6	693.6
Ethiopia	139,614.2	6.0%	21,489.0	4,501.0	132,060	3,984.4	
Kenya	122,401.8	4.9%	20,118.0	8,248.0	56,433	1,502.6	1,309.7
Angola	89,831.0	2.9%	14,722.0	39,223.0	37,886	-136.4	33.1
Cote d'Ivoire	86,658.0	6.6%	19,397.0	21,016.0	31,934	3,802.1	563.0
United Republic of Tanzania	81,664.4	5.1%	14,302.0	8,767.0	68,560	1,717.6	-
Ghana	76,837.4	3.2%	16,199.0	19,965.0	34,427	1,668.5	97.7
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	72,952.6	5.4%	26,500.0	30,000.0	109,276	3,112.9	197.8
Uganda	55,412.8	5.9%	14,200.0	7,700.0	50,015	3,304.9	0.4
Tunisia	52,934.0	1.1%	26,027.0	19,943.0	12,277	936.5	45.7
Cameroon	52,901.8	3.8%	8,500.0	6,000.0	29,124	925.3	5.6
Libya	40,587.7	-4.6%	17,566.0	29,603.0	7,381	-	-56.5
Senegal	32,339.4	6.0%	11,807.0	6,408.0	18,502	2,016.4	48.1
Zambia	25,881.2	2.3%	11,194.0	11,198.0	21,315	1,237.6	-170.3
Guinea	25,178.4	4.2%	5,917.0	10,053.0	14,755	1,828.0	-1.0
Burkina Faso	22,750.9	3.3%	6,732.0	5,479.0	23,549	82.9	2.7
Mozambique	22,430.5	4.1%	9,210.0	8,211.0	34,632	3,552.7	-44.1
Mali	21,991.8	3.6%	7,072.0	5,486.0	24,479	708.6	35.4
Benin	21,183.3	6.2%	5,230.0	3,772.0	14,463	543.0	60.3
Gabon	20,673.9	2.6%	4,000.0	13,100.0	2,539	1,144.6	-
Botswana	19,637.9	-1.5%	7,055.0	4,119.0	2,521	467.4	3.0
Niger	19,551.7	8.5%	2,742.0	1,749.0	27,032	526.5	12.2
Chad	18,564.6	2.7%	2,200.0	4,700.0	20,299	1,019.5	-
Madagascar	17,420.5	4.2%	4,833.0	2,582.0	31,965	413.3	125.2
Mauritius	15,537.6	6.5%	6,814.0	2,391.0	1,271	681.3	38.3
Congo	14,977.3	3.2%	3,100.0	6,900.0	6,333	603.6	25.4
Rwanda	13,943.2	8.3%	4,800.0	3,200.0	14,257	819.0	9.9
Namibia	13,254.0	3.3%	8,630.0	6,490.0	3,030	2,063.0	40.8
Somalia	12,041.6	3.2%	4,200.0	1,100.0	19,009	765.0	
Equatorial Guinea	11,633.0	-3.8%	2,700.0	4,700.0	1,893	188.0	153.8
Malawi	11,112.0	1.9%	3,264.0	947.0	21,655	220.4	48.3
Mauritania	10,788.0	6.6%	4,798.0	4,228.0	5,169	1,530.7	3.9
Togo	9,978.4	5.2%	3,472.0	1,510.0	9,515	83.8	-73.4
Sierra Leone	7,449.1	3.6%	2,011.0	1,263.0	8,642	274.0	-
Liberia	5,561.0	5.4%	1,728.0	1,304.0	5,613	746.8	89.8
Eswatini	4,904.5	3.9%	1,950.0	2,420.0	1,243	92.6	62.4

Economy	2024 GDP	2024 GDP Growth Rate (%)	2024 Imports	2024 Exports	Population (Thousands)	FDI Inflow	FDI Outflow
Burundi	4,446.4	4.0%	994.0	153.0	14,048	31.7	8.5
Djibouti	4,301.7	5.4%	4,385.0	3,830.0	1,169	67.8	-
Central African Republic	2,773.3	1.6%	364.0	166.0	5,331	40.4	-
Cabo Verde	2,697.8	4.9%	1,802.0	75.0	525	63.8	20.2
Eritrea	2,534.6	2.8%	571.0	482.0	3,536	- 27.9	
Gambia	2,521.0	5.5%	1,264.0	267.0	2,760	232.4	-0.7
Lesotho	2,269.1	1.9%	1,935.0	967.0	2,337	- 42.2	-
Seychelles	2,103.7	2.1%	1,450.0	570.0	130	298.6	46.1
Guinea-Bissau	1,992.4	4.0%	487.0	246.0	2,201	26.6	0.4
Comoros	1,575.6	3.6%	377.0	33.0	867	7.1	-
Sao Tome and Principe	802.5	2.2%	165.0	26.0	236	21.9	1.8
South Sudan	-	-1.5%	1,184.0	890.0	11,943	83.4	-
Sudan	-	-5.7%	4,820.0	3,770.0	50,449	-	-
Zimbabwe	-	2.4%	9,499.0	7,432.0	16,634	596.7	131.3

Source: UNCTADstat Data Centre[10]

North-African countries highlighted

In the table above, the top economies in terms of GDP are disproportionately comprised of North Africa states such as Egypt, Algeria and Morocco. However, sub-Saharan economies such as South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya also feature in the top ten, with South Africa emerging as Africa's largest economy in 2024.

Most of the top ten economies have posted impressive annual GDP growth rates, with most African economies expanding in 2024. However, certain economies, including Libya, Sudan, Botswana and Equatorial Guinea, contracted in 2024 due to various reasons. Most countries also featured net positive FDI flows, with Egypt reporting extraordinary FDI inflows of 46,578 USD Mn in 2024.

Many countries also feature large and rapidly expanding populations characterized by their high proportion of young people. Africa, as a whole, has a Child Dependency Ratio of 69, whilst the Old-age Dependency Ratio was only 6[11] . Over the next few decades, most African countries are expected to experience rising populations.

A North-South Divide

North and Sub-Saharan Africa represent differences in several metrics, including culture, economics, natural resources, demographics and climate. Thus, it is useful to differentiate between the two regions with respect to our exploration of the continent.

North Africa is generally understood as constituting the following countries: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Sudan. The region is defined by its Arab majority population and the prominence of Arab-Islamic culture.

10. https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/
11. https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.PopDependency

In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa is geographically divided from the North by the Sahara region. The culture of the region is characterized by a diversity of indigenous traditions and beliefs with lesser influence from North Africa.

The table below lists some indicators comparing the two African regions:

Table 3: North Africa vs. Sub-Saharan Africa indicators

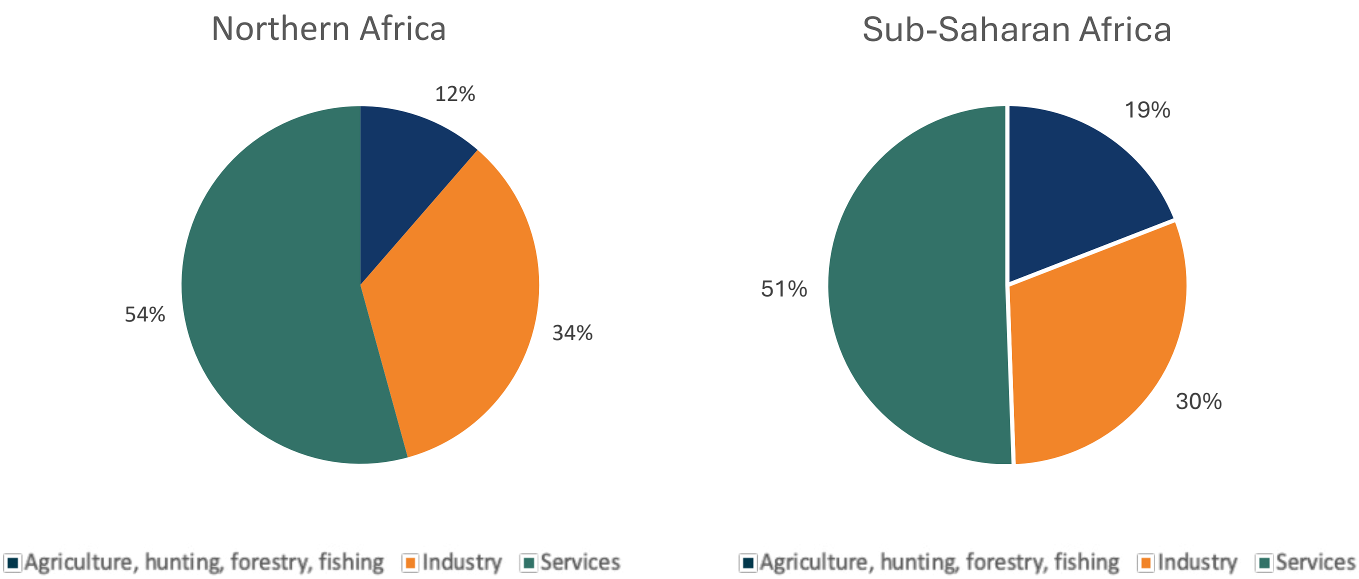
Indicators	North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
GDP 2024 (USD Mn)	856,051.1	2,012,214.6
GDP Growth Rate 2024 (%)	2.0%	3.3%
GDP per capita 2024 (USD)	3,153	1,620
Imports 2024 (USD Mn)	255,963.0	469,785.0
Exports 2024 (USD Mn)	190,072.0	436,977.0
Population	272,131	1,243,010
FDI Inflow (USD Mn)	50,592	46,440
FDI Outflow (USD Mn)	1,244	1,203
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.701	0.568

Source: UNCTAD Data Centre and UNDP

Economically, North African countries tend to fare better in measures of human development and per-capita incomes. However, the Sub-Saharan population forms the bulk of the total population of the continent, with significant trade volumes and FDI inflow. In North Africa, Egypt constituted the vast majority of FDI inflows owing to its new investment partnership with the United Arab Emirates[12].

The figure below illustrates a comparison between the economic structures of North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 2: Africa Sector-Wise GDP



Source: UNCTAD Data Centre

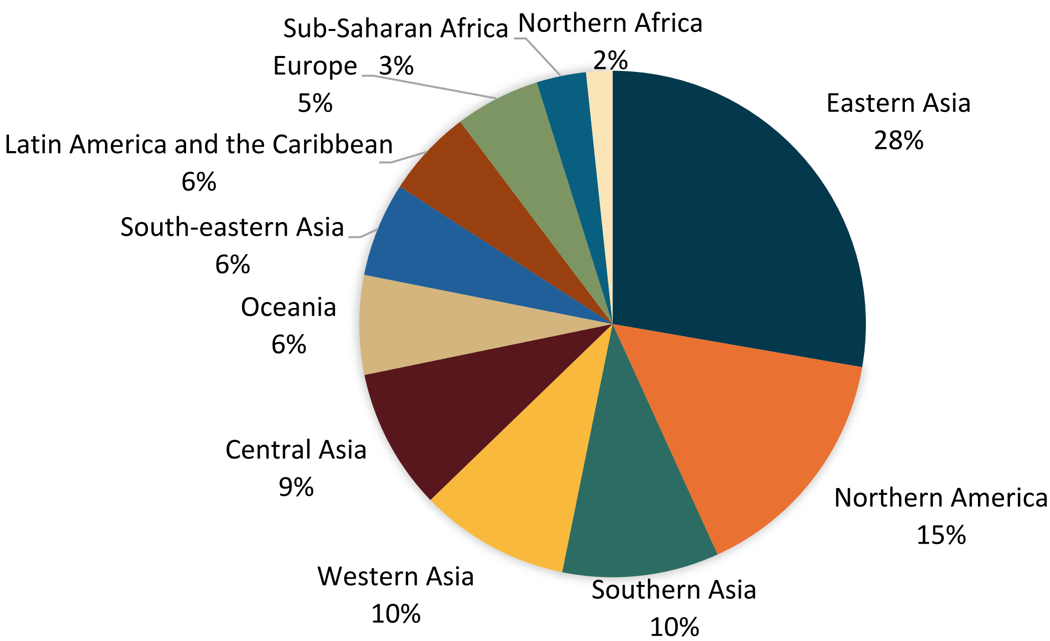
12. https://www.fdiintelligence.com/content/c92d5565-b75d-444f-be7a-5a5e00653b33#:~:text=Egypt's%20record%20FDI,real%20estate%20project%20in%20Egypt.

The services and industrial sectors constitute a more significant proportion of North Africa's GDP than they do Sub-Saharan Africa's. The latter features a larger share of the primary sector which reflects its relatively less advanced industrialization. However, there are significant inter-country disparities within regions. South Africa, for example, is much more industrialized than most of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The share of the primary sector in African economies is partially attributed to the mining sector which is involved in the extraction of Africa's mineral resources. The continent is estimated to hold around 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including highly critical and strategic minerals such as cobalt, lithium, rare earth elements (REE) and platinum group metals (PGM)[13]. These minerals are crucial inputs in the manufacture of various technologies including electric vehicles, battery storage, solar panels and various advanced electronics. This has galvanized the great powers in a scramble to secure access to these critical resources.

The figure below illustrates the of proportion of mineral production by each world region as a percentage of total production in 2023:

Figure 3: World mineral production by region in 2023



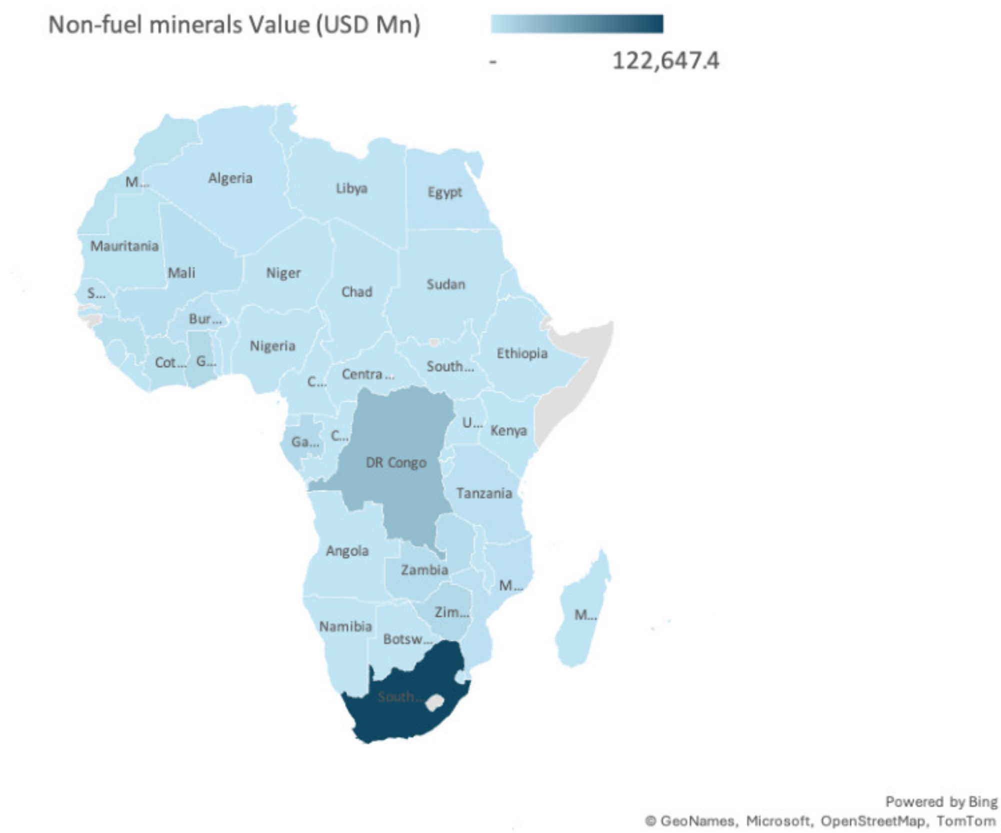
Source: World Mining Data[14]

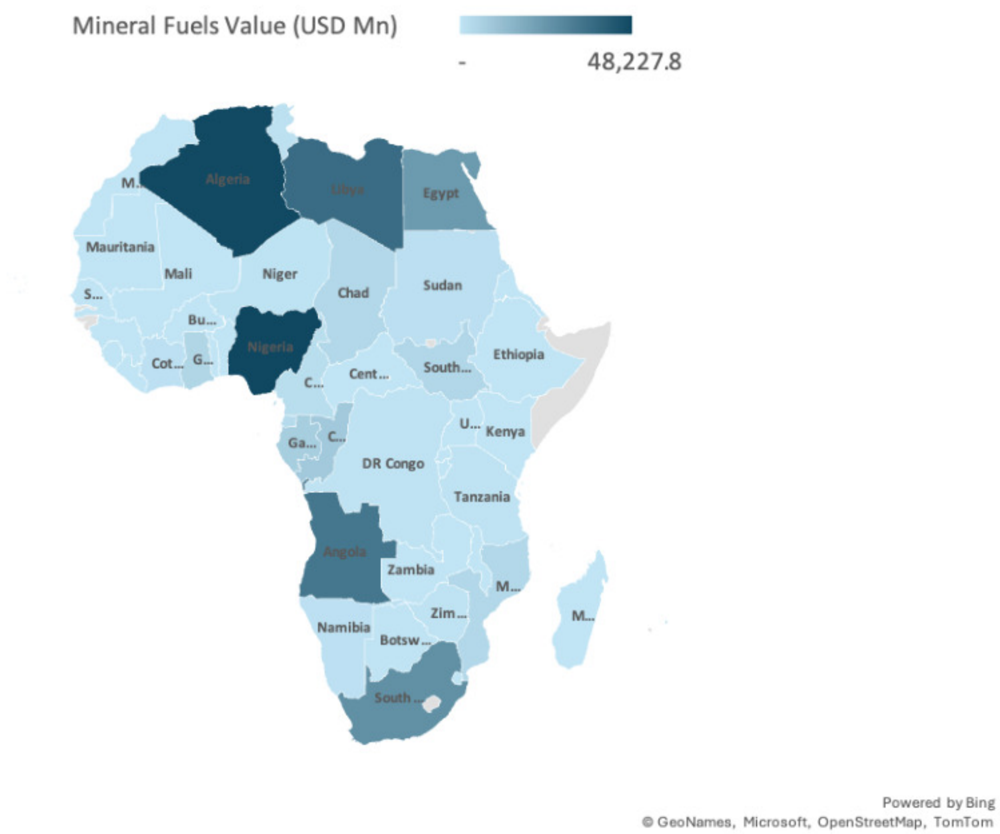
Despite holding a significant proportion of the world's mineral reserves, the African continent produced only 5% of the world mineral output in 2023, including ferrous, non-ferrous, precious and industrial minerals and mineral fuels. This suggests an under-utilization of resource extraction in the region.

Examining the distribution of mineral production further reveals intra-continental disparities. The figures below illustrate production of fuel and non-fuel minerals by country.

13. https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/critical-minerals-africas-inclusive-growth-and-development
14. https://www.world-mining-data.info/?World_Mining_Data___Data_Capture

Figure 4: Production Value of Minerals and Mineral Fuels in 2023





Source: World Mining Data[15]

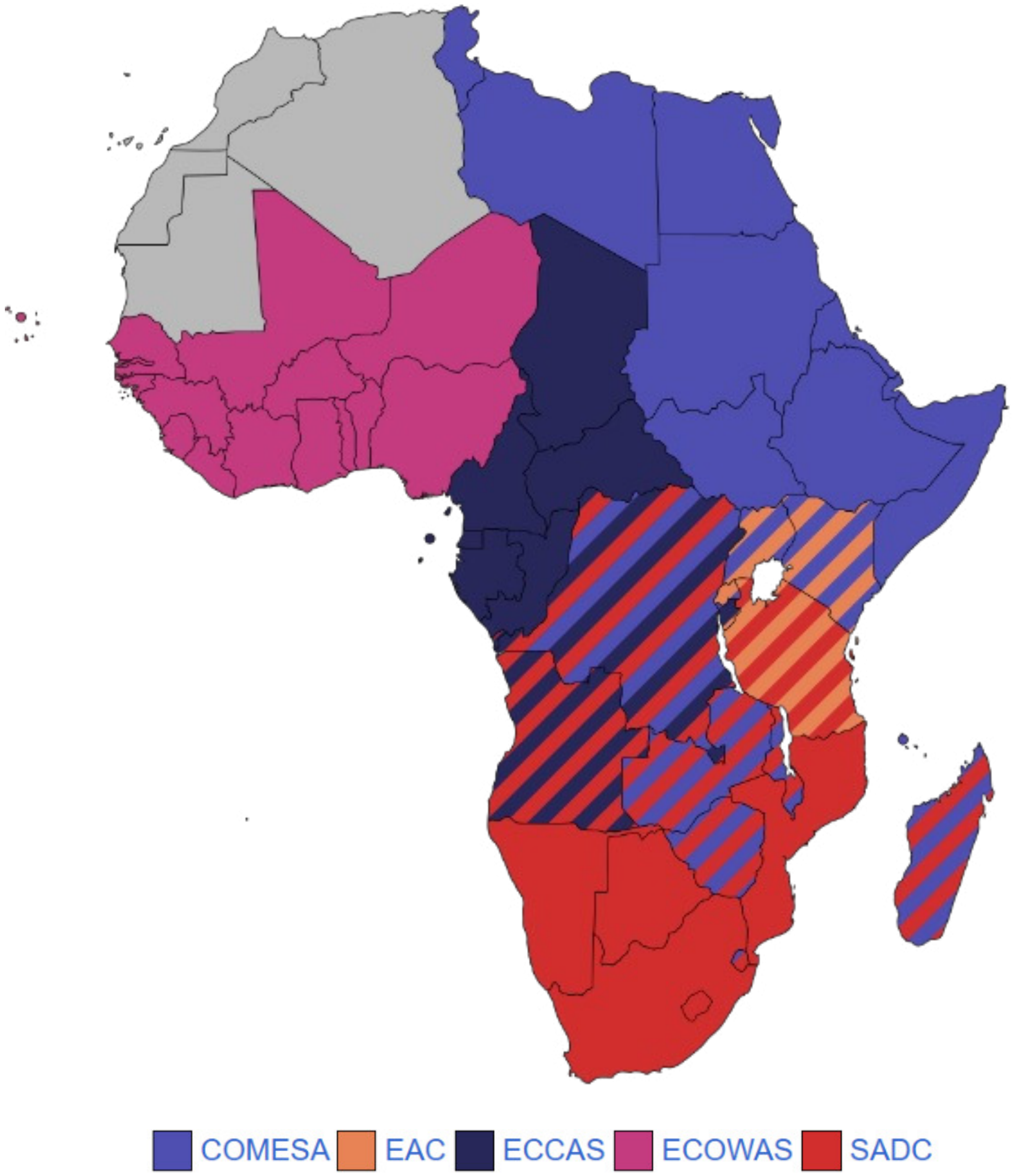
15. https://publications.opec.org/asb/chapter/show/139/2569

Non-fuel mineral production is fairly evenly distributed throughout the continent with the exception of South Africa, which was responsible for around 50% of the output in 2023.

For mineral fuels, six countries, namely Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, Angola, South Africa and Egypt constituted the bulk of production in the continent. In general, Africa is not regarded as a significant energy producer, holding 7.6% of the world's proven crude oil reserves and 8.2% of the world's proven natural gas reserves[16]. Despite this, African countries such as Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya and Nigeria constitute 50% of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) membership.

In general, Africa's non-fuel minerals are regarded as highly critical inputs in emerging technologies, and the continent is increasingly seen as an ever-important resource for the major powers.

Regional Trading Blocs



16. https://publications.opec.org/asb/chapter/show/139/2569

Africa is marked by a plurality of trading blocs at various degrees of integration and operationalization and with overlapping member states. For our purposes, this section will be focused on the five major regional economic blocs, namely:

- COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa)
- EAC (East African Community)
- ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States)
- ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)
- SADC (Southern African Development Community)

The African Integration Report, co-developed between the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), assesses the state and trajectory of integration in various spheres[17].

The dimensions assessed and quantified include:

- **Political Integration** with sub-pillars concerning institutional integration, governance & democracy and peace & security.

- **Economic Integration** with sub-pillars concerning business and enterprise development, market integration, productive & sustainable integration and macroeconomic integration.

- **Infrastructure Integration**

- **Human and social Integration** with sub-pillars concerning free movement, cultural and social interaction and science, technology and innovation.

The table below lists the scores for the five aforementioned economic blocs:

Table 4: Major African Economic Blocs and Dimension Scores

Bloc	Political Integration	Economic Integration	Infrastructure Integration	Human and Social Integration
COMESA	0.640	0.640	0.743	0.453
EAC	0.748	0.655	0.790	0.600
ECCAS	0.613	0.535	0.530	0.292
ECOWAS	0.719	0.660	0.760	0.744
SADC	0.717	0.673	0.801	0.593

As it pertains to trade negotiations, it would be prudent for Pakistan to prioritize blocs with high economic integration scores as well as geographical proximity. The blocs that satisfy these criteria are COMESA, EAC and SADC, with constituents in the east and south of Africa.

Among these, the EAC is the most operationally mature, with an implemented customs union and common market allowing for trade liberalization and free movement of person, goods, services and labour[18].

17. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/45243-doc-20250722_African_Integration_Report_main_report_EN_1_1.pdf
18. https://www.eac.int/trade?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of 55 member states. It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999)[19].

The AU, launched in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, was tasked with increasing cooperation between and integration of African states in the economic and political realms, in order to drive shared growth and development within the continent. To this effect, the Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063 were formulated to drive growth and promote a common African identity. These projects encompass infrastructure, education, science, technology, arts and culture as well as initiatives to secure peace on the continent.

The focus areas of the projects include:

1. **Infrastructure development** including an intra-continental high speed railway network, and implementation of The Grand Inga Dam Project.

2. **Promoting greater economic and social integration** via the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), an Annual African Economic Forum, a single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), African Continental Financial Institutions, a Pan-African E-Network, an African Virtual and E-University and enhancing the free movement of people within the continent.

3. **Promoting industrial and technological development** via formulation of an African Commodities Strategy, an African Outer Space Strategy and cooperations on cyber-security.

4. **Conserving and promoting African identities and cultures** via the Great African Museum and the Encyclopaedia Africana.

The AU canvasses a vast continent with significant human capital and natural resources. Many of its initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, represent valuable opportunities in a large and integrated market.

19. https://au.int/en/overview

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The Agreement establishing the AfCFTA was signed on 21st March, 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda. The AfCFTA entered into force on 30th May 2019. Trading under the AfCFTA regime commenced on 1st January 2021.

The objectives of the AfCFTA are to[20]:

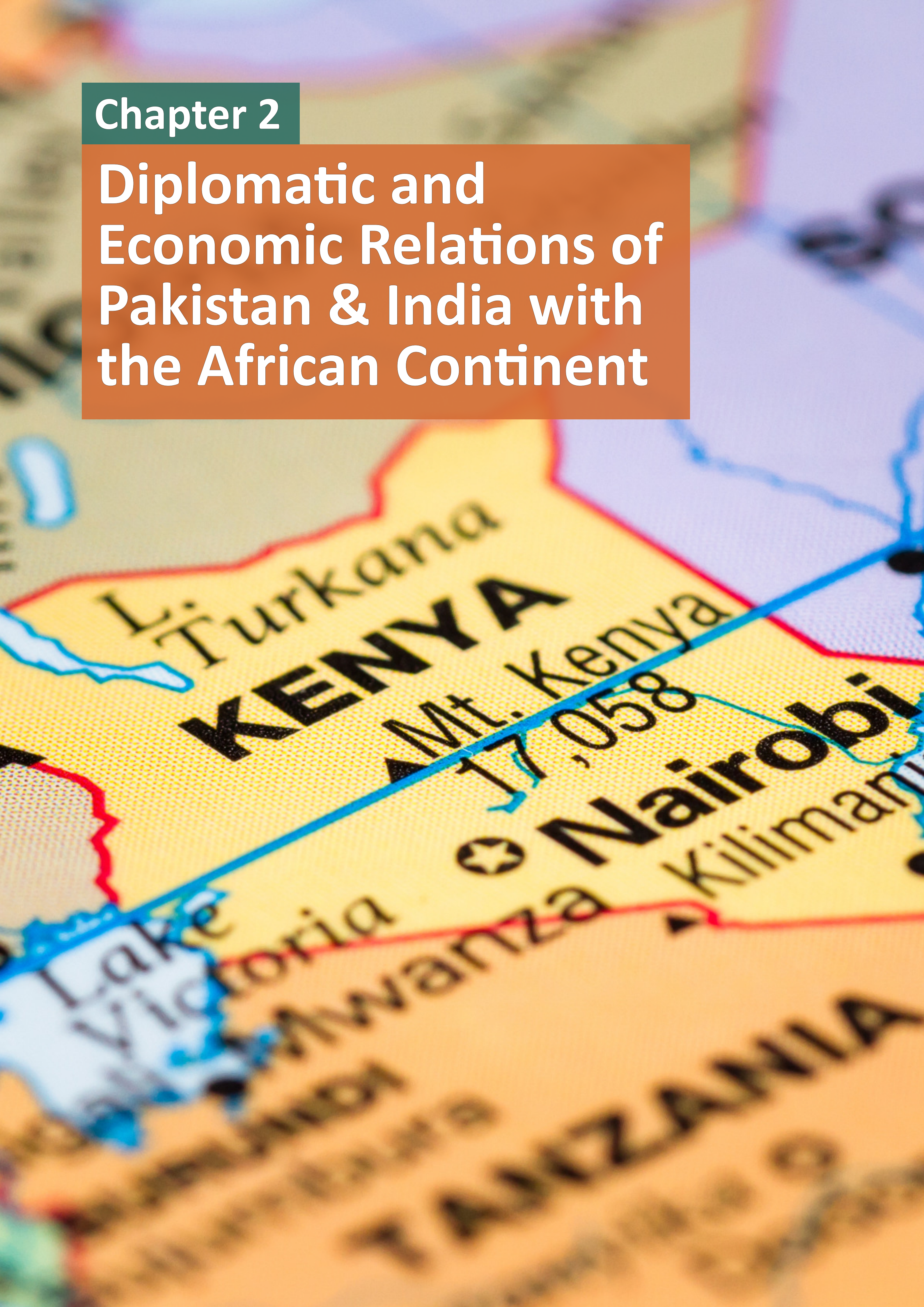
- Create a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa" enshrined in Agenda 2063.
- Create a liberalised market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations.
- Contribute to the movement of capital and natural resources and facilitate investments building on the initiatives and developments being undertaken by the State Parties and RECs.
- Lay the foundation for the establishment of a Continental Customs Union at a later stage.
- Promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties.
- Enhance the competitiveness of the economies of State Parties within the continent and the global market.
- Promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security.
- Resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration processes.

Under this agreement, countries will reduce or eliminate tariffs on 90% of tariff lines. Additionally, over a 10-year period with a 5-year transition, there will be a further 7% of tariff lines termed as "sensitive products" that must be liberalized. Other provisions include online tools for reporting and eliminating non-tariff barriers, a centralized payment & settlement system known as the Pan-African Payments and Settlements System (PAPSS) and a trade information portal to facilitate dissemination of trade statistics and market information.

20. https://au.int/african-continental-free-trade-area

Chapter 2

Diplomatic and Economic Relations of Pakistan & India with the African Continent



Chapter 2

Diplomatic and Economic Relations of Pakistan & India with the African Continent

This section will compare the diplomatic linkages of the two South Asian powers with Africa. By most measures, India holds the broader and more consequential relationship with Africa in most domains, projecting itself as a spearhead of global South-South cooperation. It is among the powers currently vying for influence in the continent along with the United States, the European Union and China.

The table below summarizes the two countries' engagements with Africa across the realms of diplomacy, trade, economics, education and culture.

Table 5: The differences between Pakistan and India's engagements with Africa

Pakistan	India
Diplomatic Engagement	
20 diplomatic missions (5 added since 2021)[21]	45 diplomatic missions (16 added since 2018)[22]
No official continent-wide engagement platform	India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) for institutionalizing cooperation on geopolitics, security, trade and climate.
Trade and Economic Relations	
Pakistan does not offer tariff preference to Least Developed Countries (LDCs).	27 out of 33 African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) benefitting from DFTP scheme as of 2023[23]
Pakistan-Mauritius Preferential Trade Agreement, Pakistan-Ethiopia Bilateral Trade Agreement	India-Mauritius Economic Cooperation & Partnership Agreement (CECPA)
Much less significant outward FDI flow to Africa	More than 50 USD Bn in FDI to Africa across diverse sectors since 2000[24]
No such service provided by EXIM bank on comparable scale	EXIM bank provides Lines of Credit (LOCs) to Africa for development projects and imports from India.
Education & Cultural Relations	
495 scholarships provided through Pakistan Technical Assistance Program (PTAP)	Potentially thousands of Africans trained in various domains through Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) & in Indian universities
No comparable continental tele-education hub	2000+ African students enrolled in Indian Universities under India's Pan-African e-network[25]
University campuses in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda[26]	One overseas university campus in Tanzania[27], One planned for Nigeria[28]
Much smaller and less established diaspora community	Millions of diasporas across multiple countries in the region, both historical and contemporary[29]
No comparable overseas cultural centres	Overseas cultural centres in South Africa, Egypt, Mauritius, and Tanzania.[30]

21. https://mofa.gov.pk/africa#:~:text=Under%20the%20Engage%20Africa%20Policy,20%20diplomatic%20missions%20in%20Africa.
22. https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/39362/QUESTION_NO5535_INDIAS_DIPLOMATIC_PRESENCE_IN_AFRICA
23. https://www.taxtmi.com/article/detailed?id=13437
24. https://www.eximbankindia.in/sites/default/files/2025-07/175file.pdf?utm_
25. https://eoiaddisababa.gov.in/connecting-india-africa-via-e-network/
26. https://www.aku.edu/Pages/home.aspx?utm_
27. https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/iit-madras-zanzibar-campus-inaugurated-50-students-in-first-batch-indians-2459087-2023-11-07?utm_
28. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/first-iit-campus-to-be-launched-in-nigeria-how-india-is-expanding-its-global-education-footprint-under-nep-2020/articleshow/124781301.cms?utm_
29. https://www.mea.gov.in/images/attach/nris-and-pios_1.pdf
30. https://iccr.gov.in/indian-cultural-center-map-list-view?page=0

Recommendations

Establish a pan-African engagement platform

Following India's example with the India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), the establishment of a pan-African institutional platform for cooperation and cultural exchange between Pakistan and Africa would allow the former to engage with the continent on a collective basis rather than just isolated bilateral engagements.

Engage with regional African forums

For trade negotiations, it would be more efficient to engage with regional blocs such as EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS and ECCAS as each one operationalizes it's financial and customs integration. Negotiations can be initiated in the short term with the most mature blocs such as the EAC.

Facilitate Trade and FDI

Extending Lines of Credit via the EXIM bank would facilitate a larger scale of Pakistani investments and exports into Africa. Additionally, cooperating on travel and Visa restrictions would facilitate business connections and allow for identifying opportunities.

Expand Education and Cultural Exchange Initiatives

Expanding bilateral access to educational institutes via e-Learning platforms would allow Pakistan and Africa to cater to students from their respective countries without the need for expending capital in constructing physical campuses.

Similarly, funding constraints regarding constructing physical cultural centres in Africa may be circumvented via other methods of cultural exchange such as annual culture fairs in select population centres.

Establish Transit Trade

China has announced a zero-tariff regime for African countries; this is likely to boost trade volumes and some of the trade that China conducts with East Africa may be routed through the Chinese constructed Gwadar port. Establishing maritime routes with logistics hubs in East Africa would allow Pakistan to serve as a vital linkage between Africa and its largest trading partner.

Chapter 3

Current Trade Patterns with Africa, Pakistan & India

Chapter 3

Current Trade Patterns with Africa, Pakistan & India

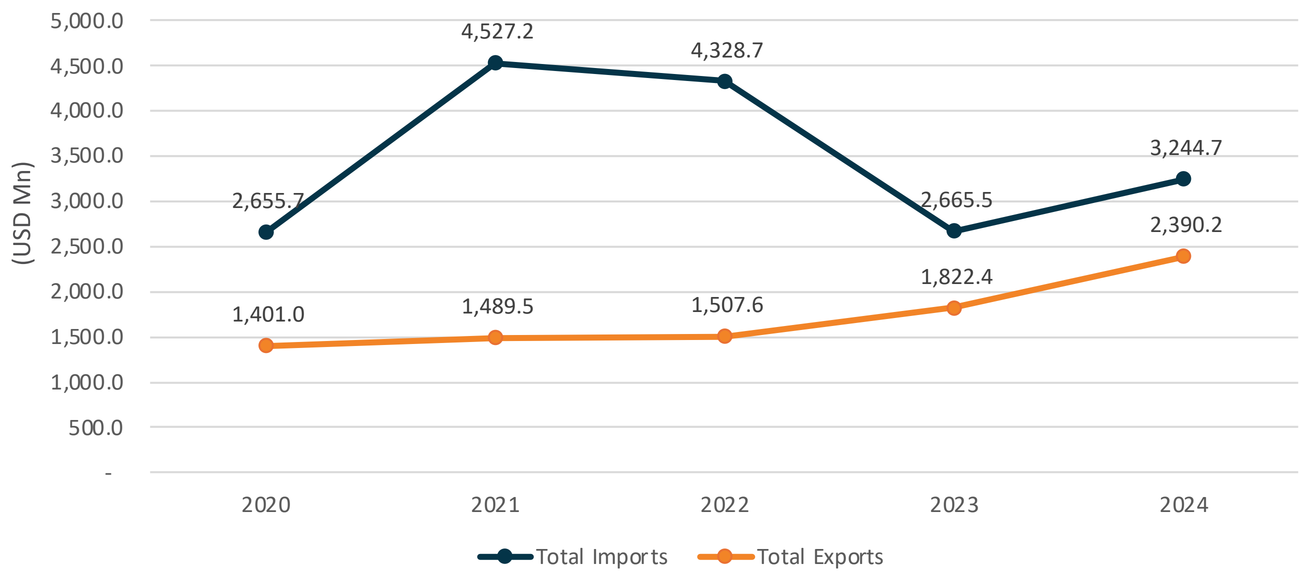
This section will be dedicated to analysing Pakistan's trade with the African continent and contrasting it with India's trade. All data utilized in this section, unless stated otherwise, has been sourced from the International Trade Centre (ITC) website.

Analysing Pakistan's import and export data may allow for identifying greater opportunities in arriving at a more optimal trade relationship.

According to the ITC, Pakistan has engaged in trade with 54 African nations over the past five years. In general, Pakistan's trade relationship with Africa is much less consequential than India's, with Pakistan's exports and imports operating at a much smaller scale.

The figure below illustrates Pakistan's imports from and exports to Africa from 2020 to 2024.

Figure 5: Pakistan's imports from & exports to Africa

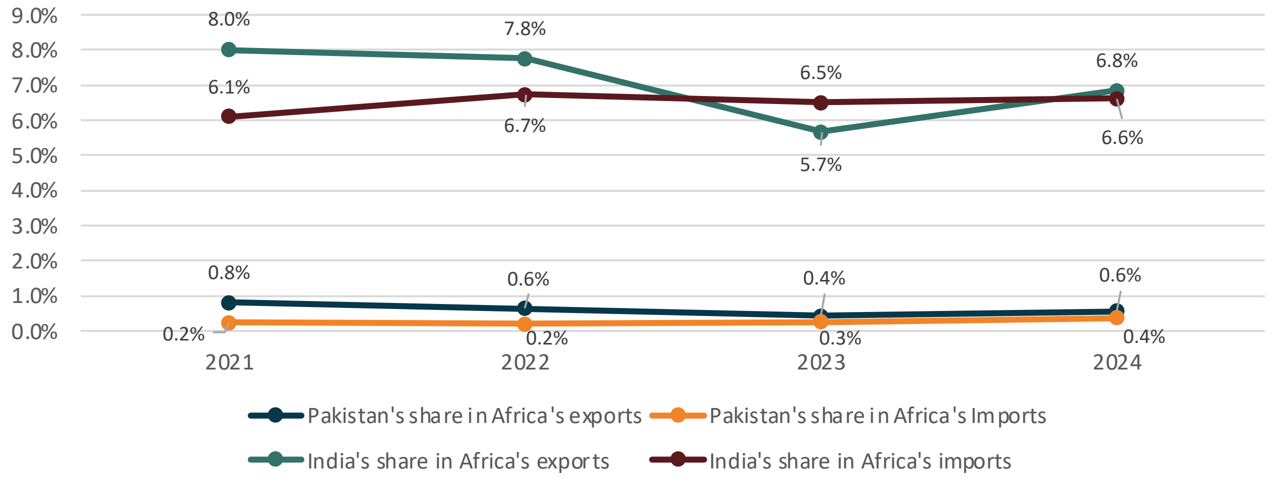


Source: ITC Trade Map

Pakistan's imports from Africa did not register a very high growth rate since 2020 with a CAGR of only 4.1%. Exports to Africa, meanwhile, increased from 1,401.0 USD Mn in 2020 to 2,390.2 USD Mn in 2024, a CAGR of 11.3%.

The table below depicts Pakistan and India's respective shares in Africa's trade. Complete data for Africa's total imports and exports was only available for 2020-2024.

Figure 6: Pakistan & India's shares in Africa's exports & imports



Source: ITC Trade Map

As observed above, India's retains a much larger share in Africa's trade than Pakistan. Although the latter has managed to double its share in Africa's imports from 0.2% in 2021 to 0.4% in 2024.

Despite the modest growth in imports and respectable growth in exports, Pakistan's trade volumes are dwarfed when contrasted with India. In 2024, India imported goods worth 40,071.4 USD Mn and exported goods worth 43,360.5 USD Mn. Indian imports from Africa were 12 times greater than Pakistani imports from Africa in 2024, whilst Indian exports were 18 times greater.

3.1: Imports

The table below lists Pakistan and India's trade with individual African countries.

Table 6: Pakistan and India's top African import sources (USD Mn)

Countries	Pakistan imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
World	56,522.7	4.3%
Africa Aggregation	3,244.7	4.1%
Morocco	636.8	13.6%
Kenya	569.6	1.8%
Nigeria	565.5	37.2%
South Africa	497.8	-11.6%
Benin	171.6	105.1%
Tanzania, United Republic of	156.9	5.5%
Egypt	95.1	-19.1%
Togo	88.5	61.8%
Zambia	71.2	19.1%
Ethiopia	70.7	25.8%

Countries	India imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
World	702,773.5	13.8%
Africa Aggregation	40,071.4	7.8%
South Africa	10,341.9	9.2%
Nigeria	5,134.6	-4.1%
Angola	4,700.8	18.4%
Tanzania, United Republic of	3,635.9	31.8%
Mozambique	2,343.5	26.9%
Ghana	1,724.7	7.4%
Morocco	1,701.6	5.8%
Algeria	1,002.3	7.0%
Egypt	958.9	-11.5%
Togo	953.0	30.1%

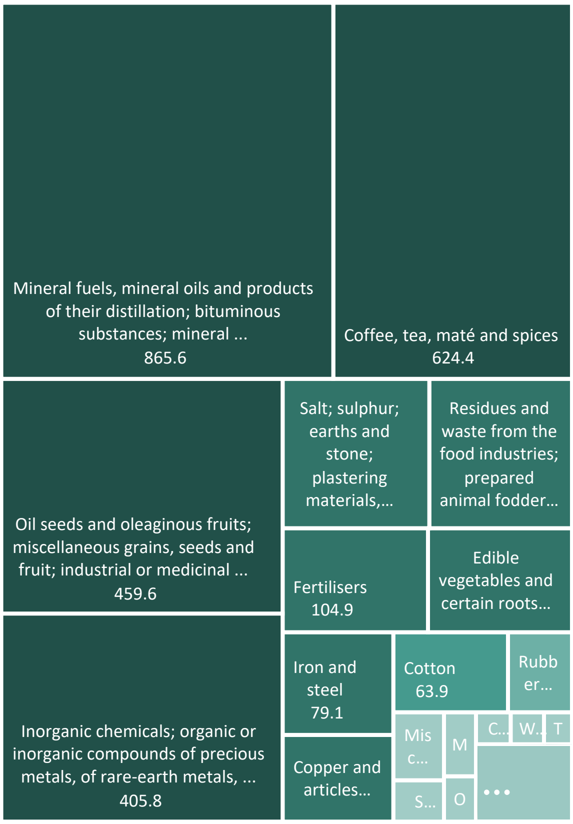
Source: ITC Trade Map

North-African countries highlighted

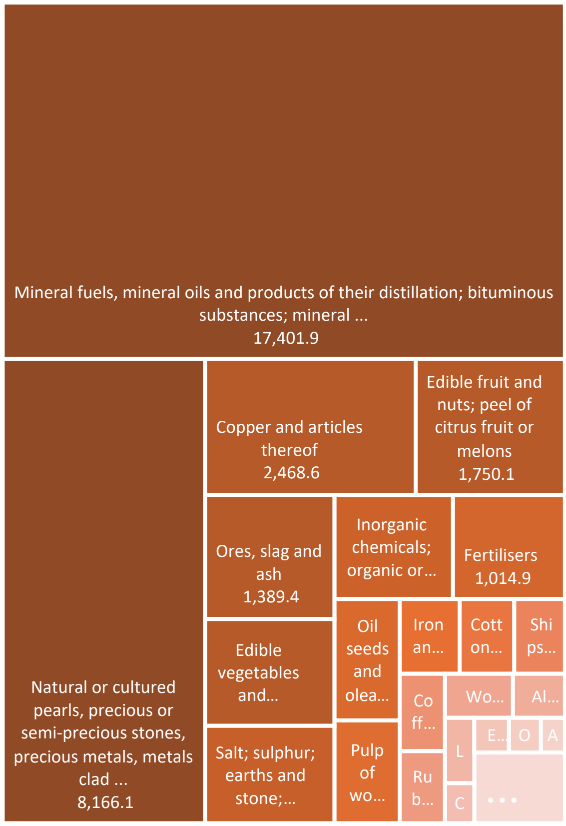
As observed above, India has three North African countries in it's top ten import sources, whilst Pakistan has two. Furthermore, Pakistan's imports from Egypt registered a negative CAGR of 19.1% from 2020 to 2024. The top ten import sources accounted for 90.1% of all Pakistani imports from Africa.

India's overall imports from Africa registered a higher CAGR of 7.8%, compared to 4.1% for Pakistan. The top ten import sources accounted for 81.1% of all Indian imports from Africa.

Figure 7: Pakistan's imports from Africa (2024) (USD Mn)



India's Imports from Africa (2024) (USD Mn)



Source: ITC Trade Map

Both Pakistan and India's largest import category was Mineral fuels and products. In fact, the category comprised 26.7% of Pakistan's total imports from Africa in 2024 and 43.4% of India's. The continent is also a significant source of raw materials and agricultural products for both countries.

Table 7: Pakistan and India top twenty imports from Africa at HS-06 (USD Mn)

HS Code	Label	Pakistan Imports in 2020	Pakistan Imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'TOTAL	All products	2,655.7	3,244.7	4.1%
'090240	Black fermented tea and partly fermented tea, whether or not flavoured, in immediate packings ...	562.2	615.4	1.8%
'270112	Bituminous coal, whether or not pulverised, non-agglomerated	790.4	471.0	-9.8%
'120190	Soya beans, whether or not broken (excl. seed for sowing)	-	422.5	-
'280920	Phosphoric acid; polyphosphoric acids, whether or not chemically defined	221.2	404.7	12.8%

HS Code	Label	India Imports in 2020	India Imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'TOTAL	All products	27,486.1	40,071.4	7.8%
'270900	Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude	9,284.8	9,735.3	1.0%
'710812	Gold, incl. gold plated with platinum, unwrought, for non-monetary purposes (excl. gold in ...	3,560.0	6,700.7	13.5%
'270119	Coal, whether or not pulverised, non-agglomerated (excl. anthracite and bituminous coal)	2,264.3	4,321.4	13.8%
'271111	Natural gas, liquefied	1,857.1	3,199.2	11.5%

HS Code	Label	Pakistan Imports in 2020	Pakistan Imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'271111	Natural gas, liquefied	313.5	378.3	3.8%
'251010	Natural calcium phosphates and natural aluminium calcium phosphates, natural and phosphatic ...	46.9	151.0	26.3%
'230400	Oilcake and other solid residues, whether or not ground or in the form of pellets, resulting ...	0.0	143.2	714.3%
'310530	Diammonium hydrogenorthophosphate "diammonium phosphate"(excl. that in tablets or similar ...	86.8	100.4	3.0%
'740311	Copper, refined, in the form of cathodes and sections of cathodes	27.1	66.8	19.8%
'520100	Cotton, neither carded nor combed	238.4	62.7	-23.4%
'071320	Dried, shelled chickpeas "garbanzos", whether or not skinned or split	2.0	44.9	85.4%
'071333	Dried, shelled kidney beans "Phaseolus vulgaris", whether or not skinned or split	37.5	40.9	1.7%
'400122	Technically specified natural rubber "TSNR"	-	35.1	-
'120922	Clover "Trifolium spp" seed, for sowing	15.9	27.9	11.9%
'720230	Ferro-silico-manganese	4.6	27.8	43.2%
'720441	Turnings, shavings, chips, milling waste, sawdust, filings, trimmings and stampings of iron ...	12.8	23.0	12.3%
'071331	Dried, shelled beans of species "Vigna mungo [L.] Hepper or Vigna radiata [L.] Wilczek", whether ...	1.4	17.7	65.1%
'381700	Mixed alkylbenzenes and mixed alkylnaphthalenes produced by the alkylation of benzene and naphthalene ...	0.1	15.6	167.0%
'890800	Vessels and other floating structures for breaking up	19.8	14.7	-5.8%
'720449	Waste and scrap of iron or steel (excl. slag, scale and other waste of the production of iron ...	30.2	12.5	-16.1%

HS Code	Label	India Imports in 2020	India Imports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'740200	Copper, unrefined; copper anodes for electrolytic refining	955.4	1,624.3	11.2%
'080131	Fresh or dried cashew nuts, in shell	978.5	1,581.5	10.1%
'280920	Phosphoric acid; polyphosphoric acids, whether or not chemically defined	992.5	1,018.2	0.5%
'071360	Dried, shelled pigeon peas "Cajanus cajan", whether or not skinned or split	238.1	1,001.9	33.3%
'310530	Diammonium hydrogenorthophosphate "diammonium phosphate" (excl. that in tablets or similar ...	492.9	795.2	10.0%
'740311	Copper, refined, in the form of cathodes and sections of cathodes	41.4	718.3	76.9%
'260200	Manganese ores and concentrates, incl. ferruginous manganese ores and concentrates, with a ...	440.5	703.5	9.8%
'710231	Non-industrial diamonds unworked or simply sawn, cleaved or bruted (excl. industrial diamonds)	885.2	646.0	-6.1%
'251020	Natural calcium phosphates and natural aluminium calcium phosphates, natural and phosphatic ...	344.6	613.8	12.2%
'470200	Chemical wood pulp, dissolving grades	90.7	526.6	42.2%
'120190	Soya beans, whether or not broken (excl. seed for sowing)	253.7	348.9	6.6%
'520100	Cotton, neither carded nor combed	121.8	342.8	23.0%
'711319	Articles of jewellery and parts thereof, of precious metal other than silver, whether or not ...	0.2	305.7	354.9%
'251010	Natural calcium phosphates and natural aluminium calcium phosphates, natural and phosphatic ...	76.1	302.9	31.8%
'260600	Aluminium ores and concentrates	151.4	300.5	14.7%
'400122	Technically specified natural rubber "TSNR"	68.5	272.6	31.8%

Source: ITC Trade Map

Pakistan's imports from Africa constitute fossil fuels such as coal and liquified natural gas, metal products and scrap and agricultural products such as tea, beans and chickpeas among others. Imports for most items have showed a positive CAGR since 2020, with the exception of iron or steel waste & scrap, floating vessels for breaking, cotton and coal.

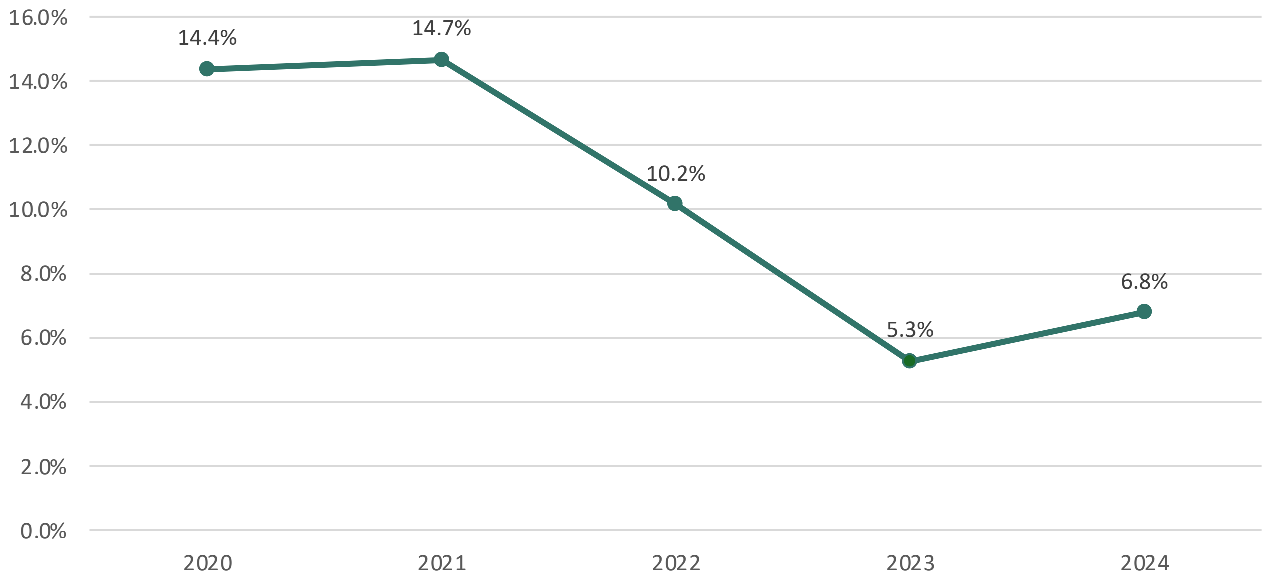
In comparison, India's top imports constitute sources of energy such as crude oils, coal and liquified natural gas. Other substantial imports include uwrought gold and unworked non-industrial diamonds, aluminium & manganese ores, uncarded & uncombed cotton and agricultural products among others.

Observing India's top imported products, which accounted for 87.5% of all imports from Africa in 2024, a distinct pattern emerges: India's imports of vast quantities of raw materials and fuels which are used to either power its domestic industry or are processed and exported.

3.1.1: A comparison of imports

Crude Oil Imports

Figure 8: India's African crude oil imports as a % of India's total crude oil imports



Source: ITC Trade Map

Imports of crude petroleum, coal and liquefied natural gas constitute 43% of all Indian imports from Africa. Africa supplied 14.4% of India's crude imports in 2020, a percentage which saw a slight increase in 2021 before cratering to 10.2% in 2022 and 5.3% in 2023. This loss in market share was principally due to India diverting imports towards Russian discounted oil in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022.

With geopolitical pressures to wean off of Russian oil imports, the country is seeking to diversify its sources of energy. African oil producers such as Nigeria and Angola have emerged as viable sources of light crudes for India with the two countries accounting for 78.5% of all Indian crude oil imports from Africa[31]. This has resulted in a modest increase in the market share of African crudes in India's oil imports, from 5.3% in 2023 to 6.8% in 2024.

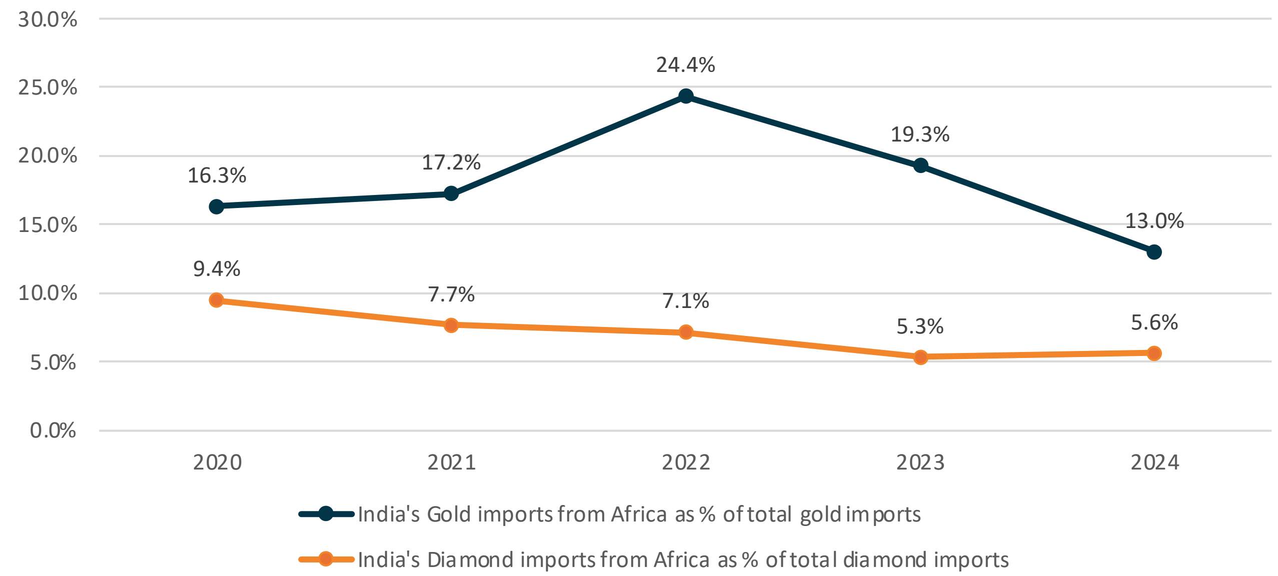
Since domestic oil production only accounts for around 10% of India's oil supply needs, the country is a major importer of crude oil[32]. Much of this crude is refined and consumed domestically or exported. Despite not being a major oil producer, India exported 70,212.12 USD Mn of refined petroleum oils. In the near future, Africa is expected to feature more prominently in India's crude oil sourcing.

31. https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/indias-ioc-buys-7-mln-barrels-middle-east-african-oil-sources-say-2025-01-17/?utm_
32. https://www.iea.org/reports/india-oil-market-report/executive-summary?utm_

Gold and Diamond Imports

Precious metal refining and jewellry manufacturing is a significant industry in India, positioning the country as an important hub in the precious metals and jewellry trade. Unwrought gold and unworked non-industrial diamonds represent a sizeable portion of India's imports from the continent.

Figure 9: India's imports of unwrought gold and unworked diamonds from Africa as a % of it's total imports



Source: ITC Trade Map

Africa's share in India's unwrought gold and unworked diamond market has declined since 2020. Unwrought gold, in particular, has declined steeply from constituting almost a quarter of India's imports in 2022 to only 13.0% in 2024. Despite the reduction in market share, both unworked diamonds and unwrought gold still constitute a notable share in India's imports from Africa.

Table 8: India's precious metals trade with Africa (USD Mn)

India's top African import sources for HS - 710812 (Gold, incl. gold plated with platinum, unwrought, for non-monetary purposes)			India's top African import sources for HS- 710231 (Non-industrial diamonds unworked or simply sawn/bruted)		
Country	Import Value	% of gold imports from Africa	Country	Import Value	% of diamond imports from Africa
Africa Aggregate	6,700.70	100.0%	Africa Aggregate	646.0	100.0%
South Africa	4,646.70	69.3%	South Africa	402.8	62.4%
Ghana	1,123.80	16.8%	Botswana	229.1	35.5%
Uganda	348.5	5.2%	Ghana	8.3	1.3%
Guinea	330.9	4.9%	Angola	3.5	0.5%
Tanzania	221.3	3.3%	Namibia	2.3	0.4%

Source: ITC Trade Map

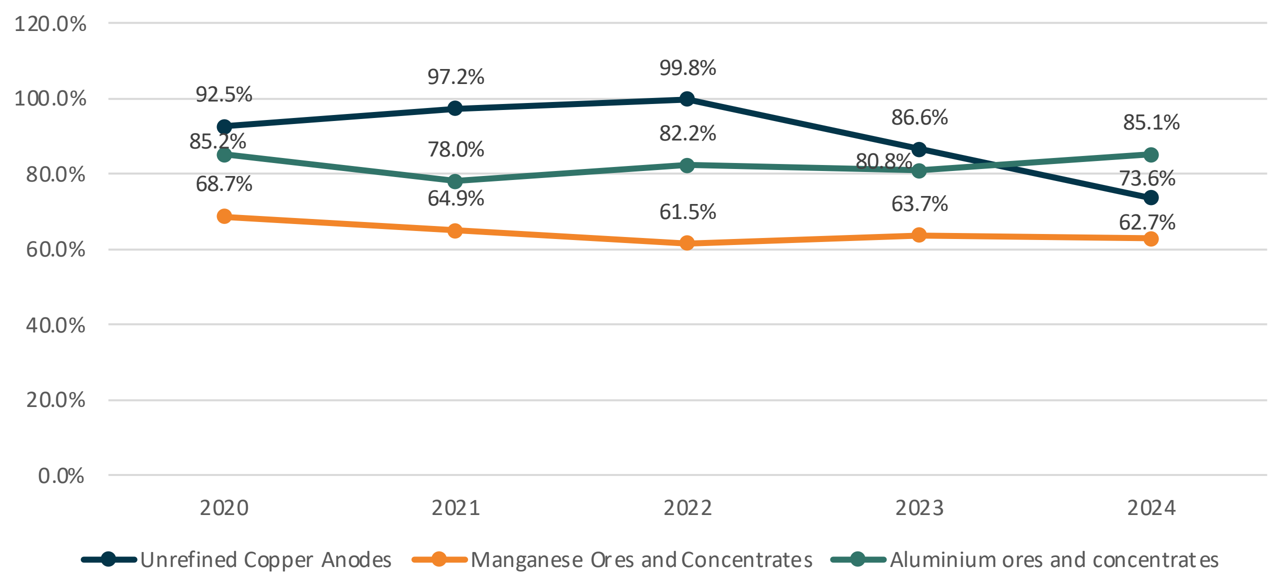
The semi-processed gold which India imports from Africa is refined and manufactured into finished products such as jewellry, coins, bars, and industrial products before being consumed domestically or exported. India has a robust and well developed gold refining and manufacturing sector, with the precious metals refining industry employing nearly 100,000 workers in India[33]. The sector also generates export value, with India exporting 12,272.8 USD Mn worth of jewellry articles in 2024, much of which comprised of gold jewellry.

Similarly, India is a major hub of diamond processing, with the country ranking as the top exporter of worked non-industrial diamonds in 2024. Reliance on Africa is relatively low and total imports of diamonds have also declined since 2022, something partly attributed to sanctions on the Russian Federation which was a major source of unworked diamonds for India. In 2024, India imported 11,449.7 USD Mn worth of unworked diamonds and exported 13,703.2 USD Mn worth of worked diamonds. As it pertains to Africa, the vast majority of unworked diamonds were sourced from South Africa and Botswana.

Unrefined Metal & Metal Ore Imports

Unrefined copper anodes, and ores and concentrates of Manganese and Aluminium also feature in India's top ten imports from Africa. In fact, Africa represents a significant share in India's imports of these commodities.

Figure 10: India's imports from Africa as a % of it's total imports



Source: ITC Trade Map

India's imports from Africa of unrefined copper anodes, an intermediate good which is further processed into refined copper cathodes which are used to manufacture copper products, reached a peak of almost 100% in 2022 before falling to 73.6% in 2024.

Imports from Africa of Aluminium and Manganese ores and concentrates have mostly remained stable, at 85.1% for Aluminium and 62.7% for Manganese in 2024. The former is refined into Aluminium metal, a key input in virtually every major industry, whilst the latter is a key input in steelmaking and battery manufacturing.

33. https://bullionworld.in/documents/special-articles/Revitalizing-India-Gold-and-Silver-Refining-Sector.pdf?utm_

Table 9: India's metal and metal ore imports from Africa in 2024 (USD Mn)

India's top import sources for HS-740200 Copper, unrefined; copper anodes for electrolytic refining			India's top import sources for HS-260200 Manganese ores and concentrates, incl. ferruginous manganese ores and concentrates...			India's top import sources for HS-260600 Aluminium ores and concentrates		
Country	**Import Value**	**% of African imports**	**Country**	**Import Value**	**% of African imports**	**Country**	**Import Value**	**% of African imports**
Africa Aggregation	1,624.3	100.0%	Africa Aggregation	703.5	100.0%	Africa Aggregation	300.5	100.0%
Tanzania, United Republic of	1,360.6	83.8%	South Africa	448.8	63.8%	Guinea	280.8	93.4%
Namibia	136.8	8.4%	Gabon	220.1	31.3%	Ghana	19.7	6.6%
South Africa	72.0	4.4%	Côte d'Ivoire	16.8	2.4%	-	-	-
Mozambique	54.9	3.4%	Namibia	12.4	1.8%	-	-	-
-	-	-	Tanzania, United Republic of	1.8	0.3%	-	-	-

Source: ITC Trade Map

India's imports of these metals are not exceedingly significant in scale, except for imports of unrefined copper anodes which were imported at a value of 1,624.3 USD Mn in 2024, but they are sourced from a small number of countries. Just a few sources represented virtually all of India's imports from Africa of these products.

3.1.2: Observations on imports

Examining Pakistan and India's imports from Africa reveals stark differences in the scale, nature and strategy that governs the two countries' relationship with Africa as a source of goods. These differences are stated below:

Differences in Scale

India's imports from Africa exceeded Pakistan's imports by 12 times in value, at 40,071.4 USD Mn and 3,244.7 USD Mn, respectively. India's imports were also slightly less concentrated, with the top ten imports at HS-06 representing 87.5% of all imports from Africa, versus 94.8% for Pakistan.

A larger focus on agricultural imports

Compared to India, a larger proportion of Pakistan's imports from Africa comprised of agricultural products. Seven out of Pakistan's top twenty imports at HS-06 featured agricultural products, excluding cotton. For India, this number was only three.

For 2024, agricultural products constituted 44.2% of Pakistan's total import value from Africa, compared to only 11.7% for India[34].

Importing finished goods versus intermediates and raw materials

A significant proportion of Pakistan's top imports were relatively more value-added in comparison to India, which imported commodities further behind on the value addition chain.
Some examples of this contrast include:

- Pakistan's top import from Africa was packaged tea, representing almost one-fifth of all imports from Africa in 2024.

- Pakistan's imports of refined copper cathodes worth 66.8 USD Mn versus India's imports of unrefined copper anodes worth 1,624.3 USD Mn.

- Pakistan's imports of ferr-silico-manganese, an intermediate good, versus India's imports of manganese ore.

India's imports from Africa represent a much more concerted attempt at importing commodities for domestic value-addition, in comparison to Pakistan.

Importing to consume versus importing to produce and export

Observing Pakistan's top imports from Africa reveals a disparate mix of agricultural products for domestic consumption and planting, intermediate metal and alloy products, phosphate-related chemicals used principally in fertilizer production, and fossil fuels including coal and liquefied natural gas.

In comparison, besides fossil fuels such as coal and liquefied natural gas, India's imports constitute crude petroleum, unwrought gold, unworked diamonds and metal ores and unrefined copper cathodes, all of which are processed and value-added before being consumed domestically or exported.

34. "Agricultural products" refers to those lines included in the Agricultural Products Group on the ITC website.

The difference between the two countries' import structures is stark: India's imports are far more deliberate at supplying it's domestic industry with raw materials to power its industrialization. The country has become a major exporter of refined petroleum, gold jewellery and worked diamonds, with Africa featuring as an important source of the raw materials needed to produce these exports. Pakistan, meanwhile, does not display any clear strategy with its imports, which are small in scale and do not feature as strong a focus on input sourcing for domestic processing and manufacturing.

3.2: Exports

Table 10: Pakistan and India's top African export destinations (USD Mn)

Countries	Pakistan Exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
World	32,460.6	7.9%
Africa Aggregation	2,390.2	11.3%
Kenya	422.0	9.1%
South Africa	191.0	0.8%
Senegal	172.6	37.8%
Côte d'Ivoire	169.2	47.6%
Madagascar	159.5	27.2%
Mozambique	158.5	7.0%
Tanzania, United Republic of	131.0	5.7%
Cameroon	112.7	51.4%
Egypt	106.2	8.3%
Somalia	90.6	6.4%

Countries	India Exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
World	441,700.6	9.9%
Africa Aggregation	43,360.5	10.7%
South Africa	8,259.5	18.7%
Tanzania, United Republic of	4,962.3	28.6%
Egypt	3,229.7	8.5%
Kenya	3,116.0	9.4%
Nigeria	2,875.2	-0.5%
Togo	2,756.8	18.2%
Mozambique	1,566.0	1.6%
Ghana	1,307.7	11.8%
Benin	1,009.6	18.0%
Senegal	968.7	10.9%

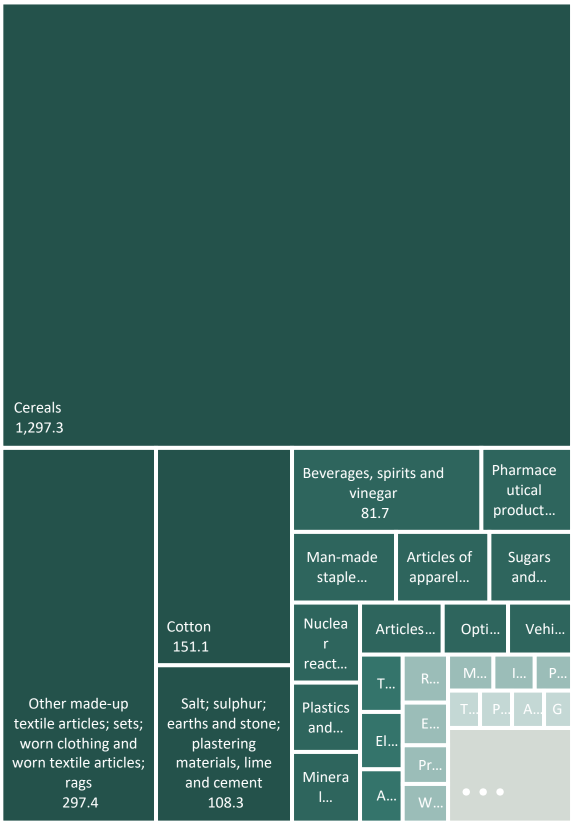
For Pakistan, exports to all of it's top ten African markets registered a positive CAGR from 2020 to 2024. The same is true for India, with the exception of exports to Nigeria. Pakistan's overall exports to Africa feature a CAGR comparable to India's: 11.3% versus 10.7%.

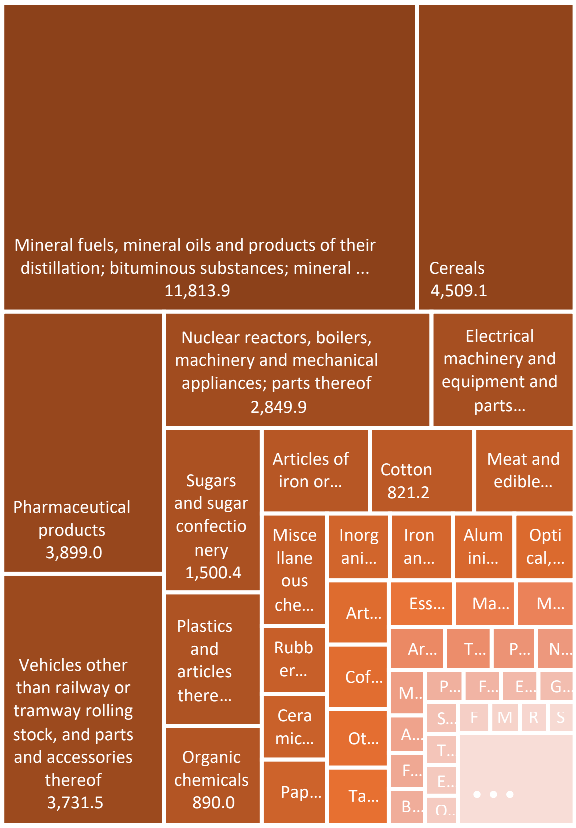
Pakistan's exports to certain markets exhibited especially high growth rates, namely Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Cameroon. This is also aided by a low base effect.

The top ten export destinations accounted for around 70% of all exports to Africa for both countries, indicating a similar level of market diversification.

3.2.1 A comparison of exports

Figure 11: Pakistan's exports to Africa (2024) (USD Mn) vs India's exports to Africa (2024) (USD Mn)





Pakistan's exports to Africa are smaller in scale and much less diversified. Cereals constitute the largest export category, making up slightly more than half of all exports to Africa in 2024. Worn textiles, meanwhile, are a distance second place in terms of export value. In general, Pakistan's exports are mostly low value added and do not feature much sophistication.

In comparison, India's exports to Africa are significantly more diversified and feature more value addition. Some of the top categories include Mineral fuels, pharmaceutical products, vehicles, nuclear and electrical machinery, etc.

The next section shall feature a deeper look into the lines at HS-06 which constitute the above mentioned categories in the countries' trade.

Table 11: Pakistan and India top twenty exports to Africa at HS-06 (USD Mn)

HS Code	Label	Pakistan exports in 2020	Pakistan exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'TOTAL	All products	1,401.0	2,390.2	11.3%
'100630	Semi-milled or wholly milled rice, whether or not polished or glazed	497.5	942.6	13.6%
'100640	Broken rice	94.1	352.0	30.2%

HS Code	Label	India exports in 2020	India exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'271019	Medium oils and preparations, of petroleum or bituminous minerals, not containing biodiesel, ...	3,859.1	9,079.8	18.7%

HS Code	Label	Pakistan exports in 2020	Pakistan exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'630900	Worn clothing and clothing accessories, blankets and travelling rugs, household linen and articles ...	140.4	185.4	5.7%
'220710	Undenatured ethyl alcohol, of actual alcoholic strength of >= 80%	30.5	76.9	20.3%
'252329	Portland cement (excl. white, whether or not artificially coloured)	35.9	54.2	8.6%
'252310	Cement clinkers	2.0	49.0	89.0%
'520942	Denim, containing >= 85% cotton by weight and weighing > 200 g/m², made of yarn of different ...	48.2	48.1	-0.1%
'630260	Toilet linen and kitchen linen, of terry towelling or similar terry fabrics of cotton (excl. ...	26.1	38.9	8.3%
'300490	Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, ...	20.7	16.5	-4.5%
'901890	Instruments and appliances used in medical, surgical or veterinary sciences, n.e.s.	15.5	16.1	0.7%
'271320	Petroleum bitumen	-	15.1	-
'521142	Denim, containing predominantly, but < 85% cotton by weight, mixed principally or solely with ...	11.1	14.1	5.0%
'630629	Tents of textile materials (excl. of synthetic fibres, and umbrella and play tents)	5.9	12.6	16.5%
'170410	Chewing gum, whether or not sugar-coated	14.2	12.0	-3.4%
'170490	Sugar confectionery not containing cocoa, incl. white chocolate (excl. chewing gum)	7.6	11.6	8.9%
'551219	Woven fabrics containing >= 85% polyester staple fibres by weight, dyed, made of yarn of different ...	7.1	11.5	10.1%
'520932	Woven fabrics of cotton, containing >= 85% cotton by weight and weighing > 200 g/m², in three-thread ...	4.1	11.0	21.6%

HS Code	Label	India exports in 2020	India exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'100630	Semi-milled or wholly milled rice, whether or not polished or glazed	2,063.1	4,241.9	15.5%
'271012	Light oils and preparations, of petroleum or bituminous minerals which >= 90% by volume "incl. ...	161.4	2,600.3	74.4%
'300490	Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, ...	2,483.1	2,446.7	-0.3%
'870322	Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of ...	372.3	1,133.4	24.9%
'170199	Cane or beet sugar and chemically pure sucrose, in solid form (excl. cane and beet sugar containing ...	697.5	970.7	6.8%
'020230	Frozen, boneless meat of bovine animals	391.5	746.6	13.8%
'871120	Motorcycles, incl. mopeds, with reciprocating internal combustion piston engine of a cylinder ...	672.3	729.2	1.6%
'870321	Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of ...	499.4	557.3	2.2%
'300241	Vaccines for human medicine	-	507.1	-
'170114	Raw cane sugar, in solid form, not containing added flavouring or colouring matter (excl. cane ...	24.6	303.5	65.3%
'520852	Plain woven fabrics of cotton, containing >= 85% cotton by weight and weighing > 100 g to 200 ...	250.7	289.0	2.9%
'300420	Medicaments containing antibiotics, put up in measured doses "incl. those for transdermal administration" ...	207.0	266.3	5.2%
'842952	Self-propelled mechanical shovels, excavators and shovel loaders, with a 360° revolving su ...	37.0	261.8	47.9%
'100640	Broken rice	309.0	215.8	-6.9%
'690721	Ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles, of a water absorption coefficient by weight ...	90.1	200.6	17.4%

HS Code	Label	Pakistan exports in 2020	Pakistan exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'521021	Plain woven fabrics of cotton, containing predominantly, but < 85% cotton by weight, mixed ...	8.7	10.0	2.8%
'630299	Toilet linen and kitchen linen of textile materials (excl. of cotton or man-made fibres, floorcloths, ...	0.4	9.7	87.2%
'950662	Inflatable balls	7.7	9.4	3.9%

HS Code	Label	India exports in 2020	India exports in 2024	CAGR (2020-2024)
'870410	Dumpers for off-highway use	49.2	178.4	29.4%
'300410	Medicaments containing penicillins or derivatives thereof with a penicillanic acid structure, ...	116.9	178.0	8.8%
'870899	Parts and accessories, for tractors, motor vehicles for the transport of ten or more persons, ...	115.1	174.7	8.7%
'851713	Smartphones for wireless networks	-	166.7	-

Source: ITC Trade Map

The top twenty exports at HS-06 represent 79.4% of all exports to Africa for Pakistan, and 58.2% for India.

Pakistan and India's overall exports to Africa have grown at similar rates since 2020, with CAGRs of 11.3% and 10.7%, respectively. For Pakistan, all items in the top twenty registered positive CAGRs, with the exception of HS-300490 Medicaments, HS-170410 Chewing gum and HS-520942 Denim. For India, only two products, HS-300490 Medicaments and HS-100640 Broken rice, featured negative export CAGRs from 2020 to 2024.

Observing the structural makeup of the top exports reveals significant differences between the two countries:
For Pakistan, the three highest value exports comprise of semi or wholly milled rice, broken rice and worn clothing and accessories, with these three items accounting for 61.9% of all exports to Africa in 2024. The remaining seventeen top export items, including undenatured ethyl alcohol, other textiles, cement and cement clinkers, surgical instruments and medicaments among others account for only 17.4% of all exports to Africa. This illustrates an export basket concentrated on an exceedingly small number of agricultural and low-value added commodities.

India's top exports, in comparison, consist of a diverse mix of refined light and medium petroleum, agricultural products including rice, cane suger and frozen meat, transportation equipment including cars, motorcycles, dumpers, excavation equipment, medicaments, vaccines, smartphones and textiles among others. These reflect India's far more mature and diversified industries in comparison to Pakistan.

3.2.2: Observations on exports

Lack of scale and diversification

Besides the obvious disparity in export volumes between Pakistan (2,390.2 USD Mn) and India (43,360.5 USD Mn), the former also does not cater to the wealthiest economies in the continent, with limited exports to the North African states, South Africa and Nigeria.

Pakistan's exports to Africa are much more concentrated on a narrow set of lines in the rice and worn clothing categories.

Commodity and low-value added exports

The three largest export categories for Pakistan were rice and worn clothing, in contrast to India which featured a variety of exports across multiple positions in the value-addition chain, from rice to vaccines to motor vehicles.

In fact, exports of goods such as medicaments and surgical instruments from Pakistan either declined or stagnated between 2020 and 2024.

Mismatch with Africa's import preferences

Pakistan's top export items to the world include large shares of ready made garments such as ensembles of cotton and jerseys, pullovers, cardigans and similar items. These items are absent from Pakistan's top export offerings to Africa.

This is due to Africa not being an exceptionally large market for textile products in the HS-61, HS-62 and HS-63 categories which form three of Pakistan's largest export categories. As such, Pakistan's export basket is ill-suited to fully satisfy African import demand as it stands.

In comparison, India performs much better in meeting Africa's domestic market demand with items such as petroleum, motor vehicles and smartphones featuring a much larger demand within the continent.

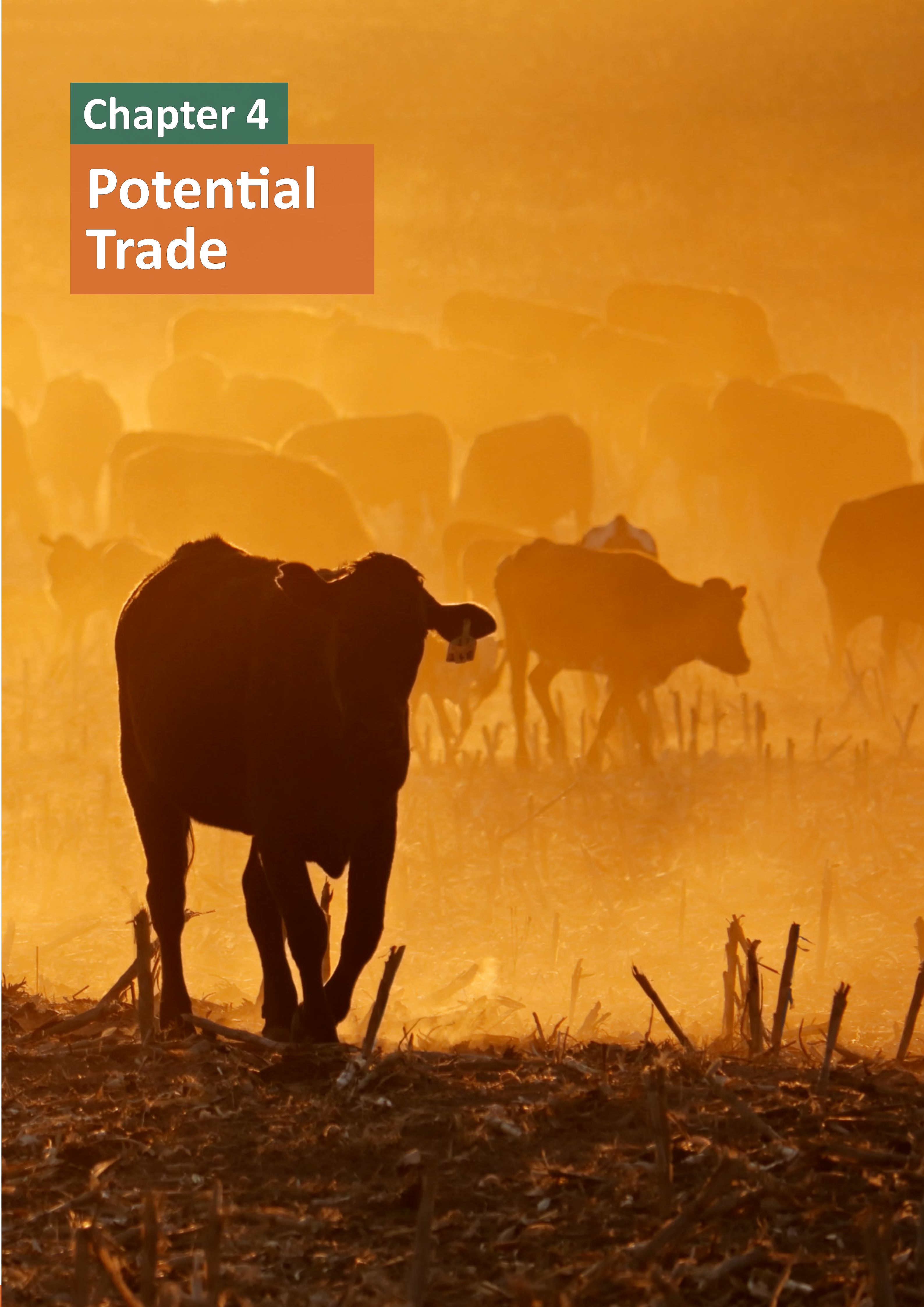
A lack of strategy

Pakistan's exports to the continent do not present a coherent and long term strategy. Half of Pakistan's export value to Africa is accounted for by rice, an agricultural commodity vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations, especially in a country with a history of environmental disruptions. The next most valuable export is worn clothing. This depicts an export pattern hinging on seasonal agricultural output and catering to low-value peripheral demand.

This stands in contrast to India's structured export thrust of fuels, machinery, pharmaceuticals and electronics aimed at satisfying Africa's growing industrial and consumption needs.

Chapter 4

Potential Trade



Chapter 4

Potential Trade

This section will be devoted to analyzing those sectors with sizeable export potentials which Pakistan can realistically tap into. Here, export potential does not refer to the potential for Pakistan to redirect exports from other destinations to Africa, but to those sectors where Pakistan already has sufficient manufacturing capacity or is expecting significant investments in sector development to make exports to Africa in the short and medium terms viable. Those sectors which face high projected African demand and for which Pakistan posseses existing local production capacity and global export presence will be given priority.

Pakistan and India face a relatively level playing field in terms of tariff exposure on the African continent, with neither country currently being party to any significant multi-lateral trade agreements in Africa. However, India has much broader and deeper market penetration developed over years of continuous industrial and business cooperation. For Pakistan to corner market share, a sustained export thrust comprised of competitive production of in-demand goods catering to African markets in key sectors is required.

This section identifies multiple sectors, including pharmaceuticals, plastics, copper metal and articles of copper, livestock and meat, cement and clinker, surgical instruments and rice. In the case of pharmaceuticals and plastics, Pakistan has significant local production capacities for certain items. For copper and the animals/animal products sector, Pakistan has significant natural endowments and is also expecting large investments in boosting value-addition and export competitiveness in the near future.

This section is not an exhaustive treatment of all sectors with significant export potential, but rather, an analysis of Pakistan's cohort of promising industries that can compete in Africa, particularly with respect to India, along with some recommendations for boosting competitiveness

4.1: Pharmaceuticals

Africa faces a vast and increasing demand for pharmaceuticals. Demand for generic pharmaceuticals, for which Pakistan possesses a significant manufacturing capacity, is projected to rise across most African regions in the medium and long terms.

Demand side outlook is promising: Grand View Research projects the African market size for generic pharmaceuticals to reach 9,290.0 USD Million by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 4.32%[35]. The various sub-regions of the continent are projected to grow at significant rates in the medium term. The table below lists markets projections for generic pharmaceuticals for those regions:

Table 12: Market size projections for generic drugs in African sub-regions

Region	Projected generic pharmaceutical market size	CAGR (%)	Years	Source
East Africa	4.4 Bn USD	6.7%	2025 - 2033	imarc[36]
West Africa	3.5 Bn USD	5.6%	2025-2033	imarc[37]
North Africa	2.2 Bn USD	5.78%	2025-2033	imarc[38]
South Africa*	2.9 Bn USD	5.7%	2025-2033	imarc[39]

*Refers to the country of South Africa in lieu of readily available projection data for the region

These projected surges in demand are driven primarily by the continent's burgeoning population, increasing rates of urbanization and high disease burdens. A World Health Organization (WHO) report identified a high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCD) in the continent including cardiovascular conditions, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory illnesses along with the continent hosting 40% of the world's under-immuzied and missed children[40]. Though there are concerted efforts to harmonize the continent's regulatory landscape and boost local pharmaceutical production, many African regions still lack the industrial base to completely cater to the continent's demand, particularly for generics.

India, often called the Pharmacy of the World, is a major long-time supplier of pharmaceuticals to Africa. In comparison, Pakistan's share is much less consequential but with significant up-side potential. The table below lists the top ten African pharmaceutical importers as well as the top ten export destinations for both Pakistan and India.

Table 13: Top pharmaceutical importers and top export destinations for Pakistan and India (USD Mn)

Top African Importers	Imported value in 2024	Pakistan's top Export Destinations	Exported value in 2024	India's top Export Destinations	Exported value in 2024
Egypt	3,520.9	Kenya	10.57	South Africa	679.55
South Africa	2,424.8	Nigeria	4.63	Nigeria	456.16
Algeria	1,499.1	Sudan	4.57	Kenya	361.69
Morocco	1,072.1	Egypt	3.84	Ghana	223.02
Kenya	705.2	Somalia	3.71	Tanzania, United Republic of	208.56

35. https://www.grandviewresearch.com/press-release/africa-generic-pharmaceuticals-market-analysis
36. https://www.imarcgroup.com/east-africa-generic-drug-market
37. https://www.imarcgroup.com/west-africa-generic-drug-market
38. https://www.imarcgroup.com/north-africa-generic-drug-market
39. https://www.imarcgroup.com/south-africa-generic-drugs-market
40. https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-08/ALL_Country%20profiles%20disease%20outlook%2026082023_compressed.pdf

Top African Importers	Imported value in 2024	Pakistan's top Export Destinations	Exported value in 2024	India's top Export Destinations	Exported value in 2024
Nigeria	660.6	Tanzania, United Republic of	2.20	Ethiopia	170.09
Tunisia	659.8	Morocco	1.63	Congo, Democratic Republic of the	152.33
Côte d'Ivoire	531.1	Uganda	1.56	Mozambique	140.98
Libya, State of	523.6	Mauritius	1.15	Uganda	104.34
Ethiopia	424.4	Mozambique	0.60	Zambia	92.00

Out of the top ten African pharmaceutical importers, North African nations constitute half of the list yet they do not feature at all in India's top ten export destinations. For Pakistan, only Egypt featured in the top ten, though with a very small reported export value. This is likely due to Egypt's protectionist policies, European-aligned regulatory frameworks and a higher focus on indigenizing pharmaceutical production.

To its credit, India has done well to penetrate sub-saharan markets with a more favorable regulatory climate, especially population centers such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda. Pakistan's exports to any single country are of little significance in comparison.

The table below lists the top ten pharmaceutical products imported by Africa in 2024.

Table 14: Top 10 pharmaceutical imports by Africa in 2024 (USD Mn)

Product code	Product label	Pakistan's exports to Africa in 2024	India's exports to Africa in 2024	Africa's imports from World in 2024
'300490	Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, ...	16.5	2,446.7	10,380.3
'300241	Vaccines for human medicine	-	507.1	1,736.9
'300420	Medicaments containing antibiotics, put up in measured doses "incl. those for transdermal administration" ...	7.8	266.3	861.3
'300410	Medicaments containing penicillins or derivatives thereof with a penicillanic acid structure, ...	0.6	178.0	809.6
'300215	Immunological products, put up in measured doses or in forms or packings for retail sale (excl. ...	-	36.4	653.5
'300242	Vaccines for veterinary medicine	0.0	6.9	435.5
'300439	Medicaments containing hormones or steroids used as hormones but not antibiotics, put up in ...	8.3	31.3	420.9
'300390	Medicaments consisting of two or more constituents mixed together for therapeutic or prophylactic ...	0.5	26.0	271.1
'300460	Medicaments containing any of the following antimalarial active principles: artemisinin "INN" ...	-	156.3	248.8
'300660	Chemical contraceptive preparations based on hormones, prostaglandins, thromboxanes, leukotrienes, ...	-	46.3	246.9

Source: ITC Trade Map

The top import, representing 57.3% of all pharmaceutical imports by African countries is HS-300490 (Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes). This consists of medicaments in pre-measured doses and packaged for retail. It is both India and Pakistan's most exported pharmaceutical product, with the former accounting for more than a fifth of Africa's imports. It is highlighted to indicate that it is an item of particularly significant export potential for Pakistan.

Unlike Pakistan, India also supplies the continent with various other products across the value chain, including human and animal vaccines and medicaments containing antibiotics, penicillin, and antimalarial agents among others.

The starkest difference is observed in scale: Pakistan's total pharmaceutical exports to Africa amounted to 38.9 USD Mn in 2024, compared to India's 3,899.0 USD Mn.

India's dominance over Pakistan in supplying Africa's various pharmaceutical needs are a result of a decades long exercise in industrial cooperation and brand-building in the continent. This is a result of the many advantages held by India's pharmaceutical industry over Pakistan. Namely:

- Vertical integration of supply chain with local production of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), a key input in drug manufacturing. Pakistan, in comparison, imports most of its APIs[41].

- India has more than 200 US-FDA certified drug manufacturing plants. Pakistan has none[42].

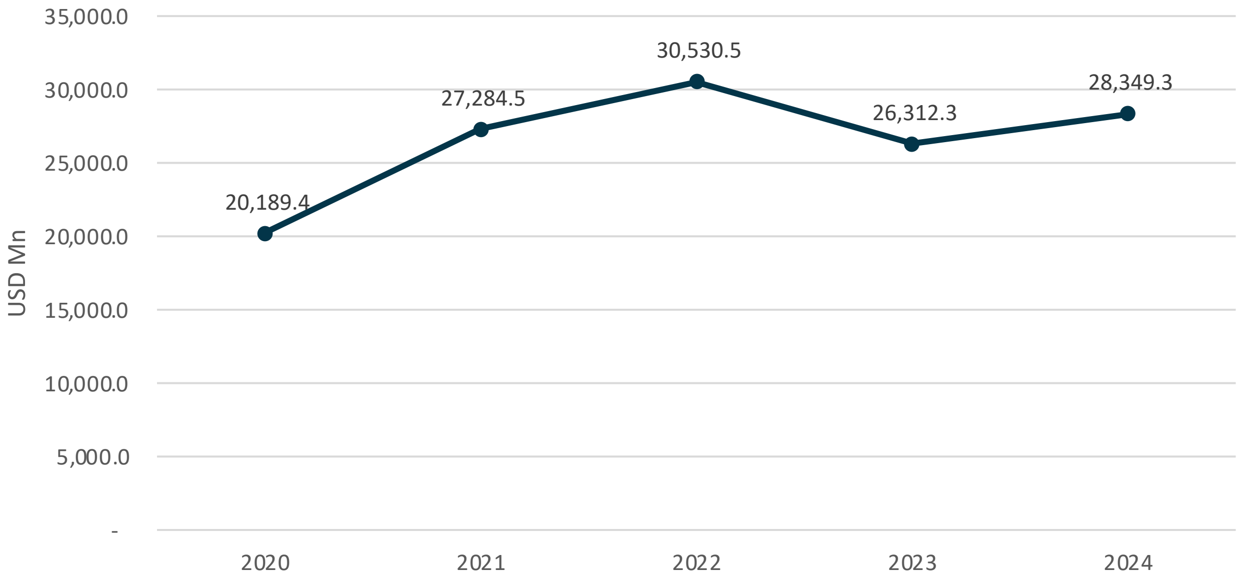
- Indian firms have decades of experience in navigating sub-Saharan Africa's disparate regulations and have built a robust quality perception for their affordable drugs, especially in their dealings with various NGOs operating in the African region.

41. https://www.icap.org.pk/paib/pdf/guidelines/PharmaIndustry2ndEdition.pdf
42. https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0305989#:~:text=In%20contrast%2C%20Pakistan's%20low%20exports,and%20substandard%20products%20%5B11%5D.

4.2: Plastics

Africa has a very large demand for plastics, importing 28,349.3 USD Mn worth of plastic products in 2024. The figure below depicts the trend of Africa's plastics imports over the last five years.

Figure 12: Africa plastics imports 2020-2024



Source: ITC Trade Map

Africa's plastics imports have risen by a CAGR of 7.0% since 2020, reaching a peak of 30,530.5 USD Mn in 2022 before dropping in 2023 and subsequently recovering in 2024 to 28,349.3 USD Mn.

The table below lists the top ten plastics imports by African countries in 2024.

Table 15: Top twenty imports of plastics by Africa in 2024 (USD Mn)

Product code	Product label	Pakistan's exports to Africa 2024	India's exports to Africa 2024	Africa's imports from World 2024	Pakistan's exports to World 2024
'390120	Polyethylene with a specific gravity of >= 0,94, in primary forms	-	16.0	2,828.9	0.5
'390210	Polypropylene, in primary forms	0.2	58.8	2,344.2	1.4
'392690	Articles of plastics and articles of other materials of heading 3901 to 3914, n.e.s (excl. ...	0.1	42.3	2,040.9	4.9
'390110	Polyethylene with a specific gravity of < 0,94, in primary forms	0.1	65.1	2,022.8	1.0
'390761	Poly"ethylene terephthalate", in primary forms, having a viscosity number of >= 78 ml/g	1.7	65.1	1,320.6	259.8
'390410	Poly"vinyl chloride", in primary forms, not mixed with any other substances	0.8	0.8	961.9	5.3
'390690	Acrylic polymers, in primary forms (excl. poly"methyl methacrylate")	0.1	64.6	933.4	1.4
'392190	Plates, sheets, film, foil and strip, of plastics, reinforced, laminated, supported or similarly ...	0.0	93.6	747.8	0.1

Product code	Product label	Pakistan's exports to Africa 2024	India's exports to Africa 2024	Africa's imports from World 2024	Pakistan’s exports to World 2024
'390230	Propylene copolymers, in primary forms	-	6.7	735.5	0.0
'390729	Polyethers, in primary forms (excl. polyacetals, bis(polyoxyethylene) methylphosphonate and ...	-	1.8	652.7	-
'392020	Plates, sheets, film, foil and strip, of non-cellular polymers of ethylene, not reinforced, ...	4.5	51.1	621.1	39.7
'392010	Plates, sheets, film, foil and strip, of non-cellular polymers of ethylene, not reinforced, ...	0.8	33.9	596.3	4.8
'391990	Self-adhesive plates, sheets, film, foil, tape, strip and other flat shapes, of plastics, whether ...	0.0	20.0	496.8	0.1
'392330	Carboys, bottles, flasks and similar articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of ...	0.1	7.6	442.0	0.8
'390769	Poly"ethylene terephthalate", in primary forms, having a viscosity number of < 78 ml/g	-	9.1	418.5	8.1
'392350	Stoppers, lids, caps and other closures, of plastics	0.0	21.8	408.9	2.8
'391740	Fittings, e.g. joints, elbows, flanges, of plastics, for tubes, pipes and hoses	-	5.7	395.1	0.2
'392390	Articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of plastics (excl. boxes, cases, crates ...	0.1	51.6	354.9	2.3
'392410	Tableware and kitchenware, of plastics	0.4	47.5	338.5	1.7
'391739	Flexible tubes, pipes and hoses, of plastics, reinforced or otherwise combined with other materials ...	0.0	2.3	328.0	0.2

Source: ITC Trade Map

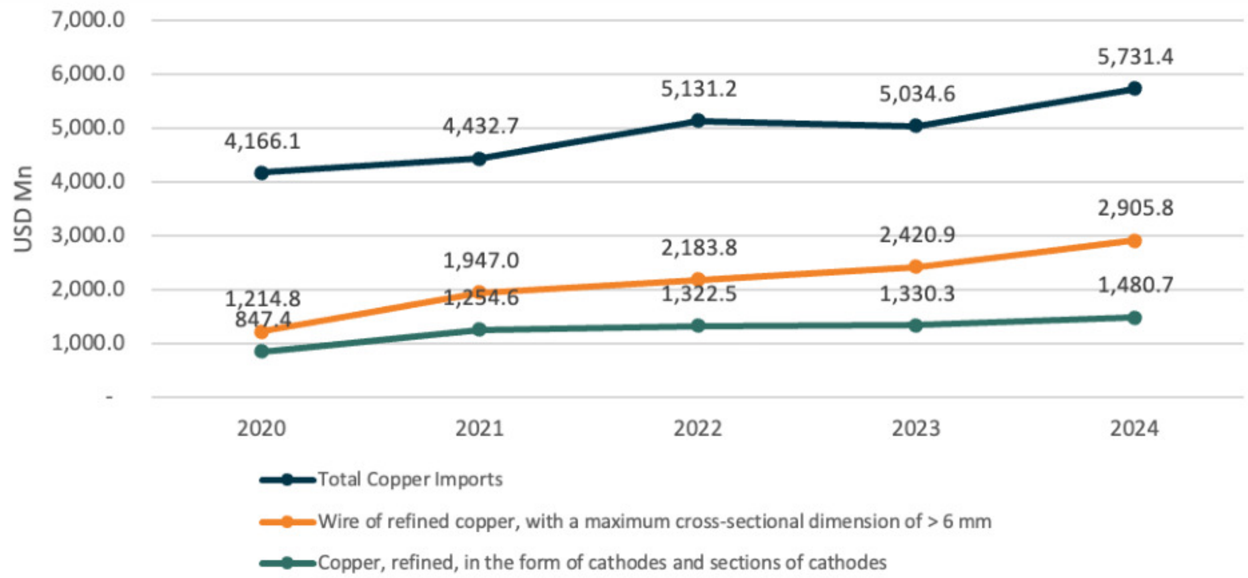
The top twenty products represented 18,988.8 USD Mn worth of imports by Africa. Most of these top imports consist of plastic in their primary forms to be used as inputs in a manufacturing process. Surprisingly, India’s dominance in this sector is not so pronounced, with the country only accounting for 4.3% of Africa’s plastics imports in 2024. Neither country seems to have any significant market share in the top ten products. This is because China, Saudi Arabia, the United States and United Arab Emirates constitute the largest import partners for this product category.

For Pakistan to scale up exports, a shift towards value-added manufactured goods is required. Whilst primary forms of polyethylene terepthalate feature high import volumes, much of the market is cornered by much larger players such as China. HS codes inlcuding HS-392190, HS-392020 and HS-392010 among others which pertain to plastic products such as plates, sheets, films, foils etc. present a viable path towards catering to Africa’s value added plastics segment.

4.3: Copper and Articles

African countries imported 5,731.4 USD Mn of copper articles in 2024. Much of these imports were of copper articles such as copper wires, tubes, pipes, bars and copper cathodes. The figure below maps the trend of African copper imports for the last five years.

Figure 13: Africa imports of copper 2020-2024



Source: ITC Trade Map

Africa's copper imports have risen steadily since 2020, with a CAGR of 6.6%. Much of this growth is attributed to imports of copper wires and refined copper cathodes, with the two products accounting for 76.5% of all copper imports in 2024. Africa's industrial expansion and rising urbanization are expected to drive further demand for copper for applications such as electric vehicle and solar panel manufacturing and urban infrastructure expansion.

The table below lists the top twenty African countries by copper import value in 2024.

Table 16: Top twenty African copper importers in 2024 (USD Mn)

Importers	Imported value in 2020	Imported value in 2024	CAGR
Africa Aggregation	4,166.2	5,731.4	6.6%
Egypt	663.8	2,308.2	28.3%
Morocco	519.3	1,144.3	17.1%
South Africa	516.4	842.0	10.3%
Tunisia	341.8	651.9	13.8%
Algeria	174.8	229.3	5.6%
Kenya	54.2	67.1	4.4%
Tanzania, United Republic of	30.2	63.0	15.8%
Senegal	31.6	51.0	10.0%
Côte d'Ivoire	27.7	43.4	9.4%
Ghana	-	31.4	-

Importers	Imported value in 2020	Imported value in 2024	CAGR
Botswana	21.4	30.9	7.6%
Nigeria	51.1	25.9	-12.7%
Libya, State of	6.4	22.4	28.4%
Zimbabwe	12.3	21.2	11.6%
Ethiopia	37.3	19.8	-11.9%
Djibouti	-	19.1	-
Angola	8.9	17.1	14.0%

Source: ITC Trade Map

As seen above, North African nations feature at the top in the list of African copper importers, with Egypt alone being responsible for almost half of all import demand in 2024.

The table below lists the top twenty copper products imported by African countries in 2024.

Table 17: Africa top twenty copper imports (USD Mn)

Product code	Product label	Pakistan's exports to Africa 2024	India exports to Africa 2024	Africa's imports from World 2024	Pakistan's exports to World 2024
'740811	Wire of refined copper, with a maximum cross-sectional dimension of > 6 mm	0.0	4.6	2,905.8	0.0
'740311	Copper, refined, in the form of cathodes and sections of cathodes	-	0.1	1,480.7	-
'741110	Tubes and pipes of refined copper	-	2.9	225.8	0.0
'741300	Stranded wire, cables, plaited bands and the like, of copper (excl. electrically insulated ...	-	3.2	128.2	-
'740710	Bars, rods and profiles, of refined copper, n.e.s.	-	2.5	126.2	0.2
'740819	Wire of refined copper, with a maximum cross-sectional dimension of <= 6 mm	-	1.0	110.9	2.9
'741220	Copper alloy tube or pipe fittings "e.g., couplings, elbows, sleeves"	-	3.7	105.8	0.0
'741980	Articles of copper, n.e.s.	0.0	5.5	92.4	0.1
'741011	Refined copper foil, not backed, of a thickness of <= 0,15 mm (excl. stamping foils of heading ...	-	1.1	89.8	-
'740400	Waste and scrap, of copper (excl. ingots or other similar unwrought shapes, of remelted copper ...	-	0.0	59.0	23.3
'740721	Bars, rods and profiles, of copper-zinc base alloys "brass", n.e.s.	-	0.3	50.0	0.0
'741129	Tubes and pipes of copper alloys (excl. copper-zinc base alloys "brass", copper-nickel base ...	-	0.1	43.8	0.0
'740911	Plates, sheets and strip, of refined copper, in coils, of a thickness of > 0,15 mm (excl. expanded ...	-	0.3	41.5	-
'741210	Refined copper tube or pipe fittings "e.g., couplings, elbows, sleeves"	-	0.2	23.1	-

Product code	Product label	Pakistan's exports to Africa 2024	India exports to Africa 2024	Africa's imports from World 2024	Pakistan's exports to World 2024
'740829	Wire of copper alloys (other than copper-zinc alloys [brass], copper-nickel alloys [cupro-nickel] ...	-	0.0	21.0	0.2
'741533	Screws, bolts, nuts and similar articles, threaded, of copper (other than screw hooks, ring- ...	-	1.1	20.3	0.0
'740729	Bars, rods and profiles of copper alloys, n.e.s. (excl. such articles of copper-zinc base alloys ...	-	0.4	20.1	0.1
'740921	Plates, sheets and strip, of copper-zinc base alloys "brass", of a thickness of > 0,15 mm, ...	-	2.6	19.6	-
'741820	Sanitary ware and parts thereof, of copper (excl. cans, boxes and similar containers of heading ...	0.0	2.1	17.5	1.9
'740929	Plates, sheets and strip, of copper-zinc base alloys "brass", of a thickness of > 0,15 mm, ...	-	0.5	15.9	0.0

Source: ITC Trade Map

Africa's top twenty imports accounted for 5,597.4 USD Mn, or 97.7% of all copper imports in 2024. As stated above, whilst most of these imports were comprised of finished copper articles, refined copper cathodes accounted for a significant share worth 1,480.7 USD Mn.

The table below summarizes a comparison between Pakistan and India's market shares in Africa's copper market.

Table 18: Pakistan and India's share in Africa's copper market

	African copper imports	India's share in Africa's imports	Pakistan's share in Africa's imports
Value (USD Mn)	5,731.4	42.5	0.0
Share	100%	0.7%	0.0%
Composition of Trade	Refined copper cathodes, Variety of manufactured copper articles	Manufactured copper articles, wires, tubes, pipes, bars, rods, alloys etc.	Insignificant exports

Source: ITC Trade Map

As evidenced from table 17, neither Pakistan nor India command any noteworthy share in the African copper market. Most of Africa's copper imports are sourced from the United Arab Emirates, Spain, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Belgium, Italy and China among others.

Pakistan exports a relatively sizeable value of copper, with exports amounting to 842.3 USD Mn in 2024. Around 94.0% of the export value was accounted for by one product: HS-740319 (Refined, unwrought copper). This is a product not imported by any African country in any significant quantity. Thus, Pakistan's copper exports are largely mismatched with Africa's demand which is mainly concentrated on value addition.

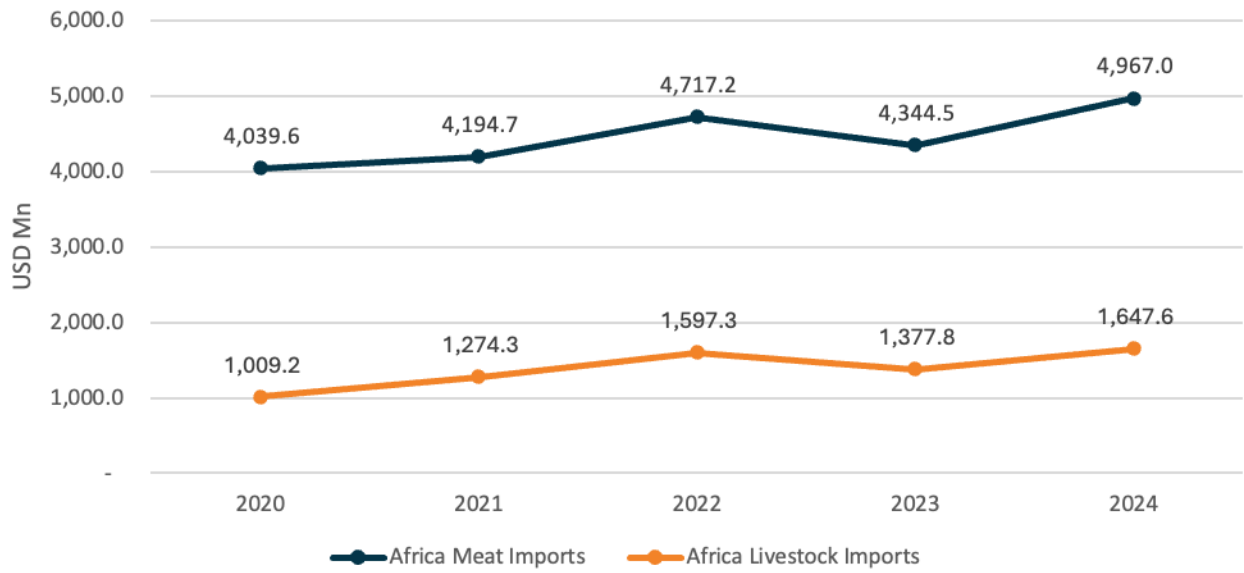
Africa's actual copper demand lies much more so with refined copper cathodes. These copper cathodes are pure plates of copper produced through an electrolytic refining process that can be traded on exchanges such as the London Metal Exchange (LME). Their strict standardization and value-addition make them a valuable and widely traded input in copper manufacturing. Producing these cathodes requires smelting and electrorefining, two capabilities which Pakistan does not operate on a large-scale as yet.

Catering to the African copper market will require development in downstream processing and refining. Pakistan has plentiful reserves of copper ores and significant present and future expected investments in mining, extraction and port logistics. The operationalization of Reko Diq presents with a valuable opportunity for the development of additional smelter and electro-refining facilities.

4.4: Livestock and Meat

In 2024, Africa imported 1,647.5 USD Mn worth of livestock and 4,963.7 USD Mn worth of meat. The chart below illustrates these imports for the last five years.

Figure 14: Africa meat & livestock imports



Source: ITC Trade Map

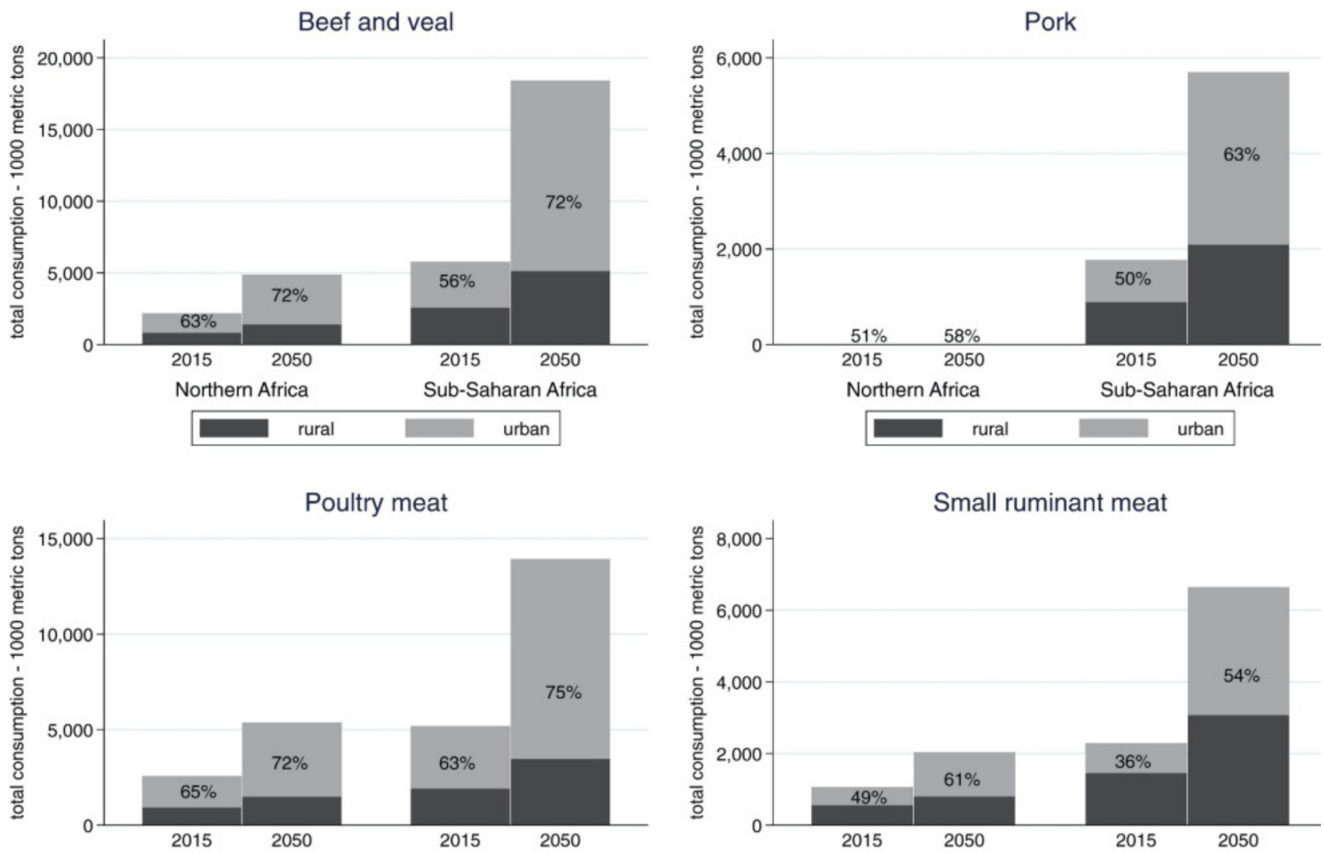
Imports for both have increased, with imports for meat increasing by a CAGR of 4.2% and livestock by 10.3% since 2020. Between 2015 and 2050, a study by Latino et. al estimated a three-fold increase in meat consumption in Africa with a part of this consumption being met via imports[43]. The reasons behind this projected surge include a swelling population, urbanization, rising incomes and climate pressures reducing domestic herd sizes.

North African countries such as Algeria and Morocco, in particular, have seen livestock populations shrink in recent years, owing to droughts which have resulted in livestock feed shortages and pasture loss[44] [45]. The North African states also face asymmetries in local supply and demand during certain times of the year such as the Eid-ul-Adha festival when livestock is often imported to meet supply or stabilize prices.

43. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211912420300535#sec5
44. https://apnews.com/article/algeria-sheep-imports-eid-aladha-94d6fe50bb588827d6b2e7dd2ac5d920
45. https://www.foodbusinessmea.com/morocco-struggles-with-a-declining-livestock-population-increasing-meat-imports/

Figure 14 depicts the projected consumption for various types of meat in North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 15: Meat consumption in 2015 and 2050



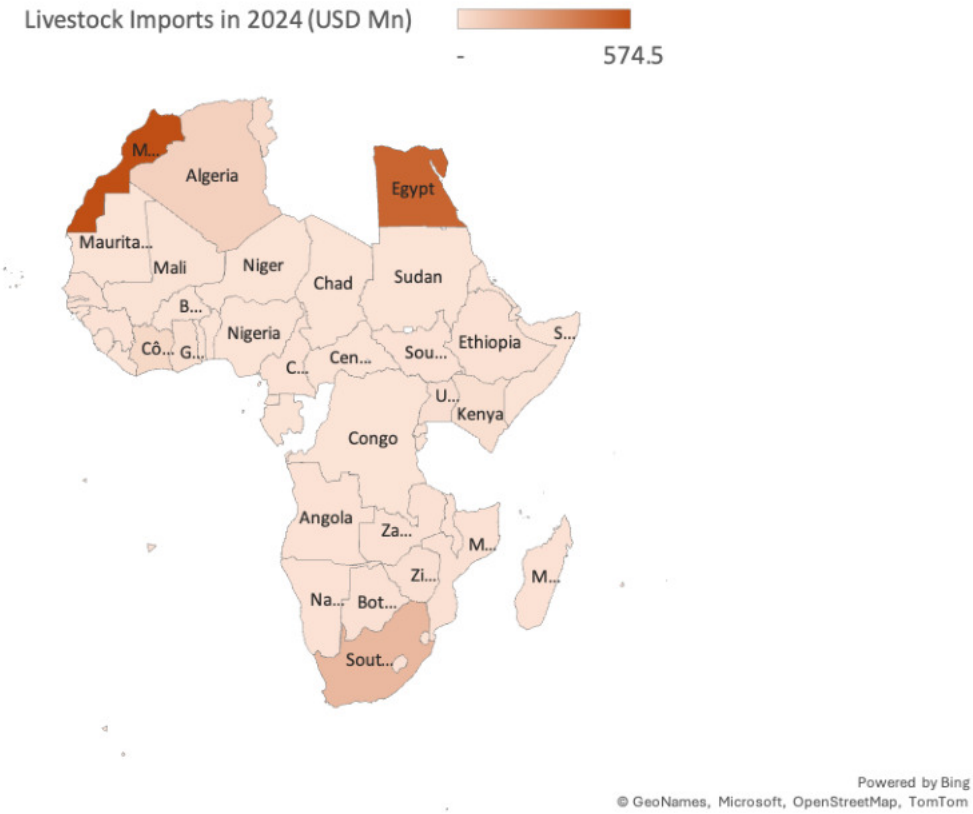
Source: Latino et al.

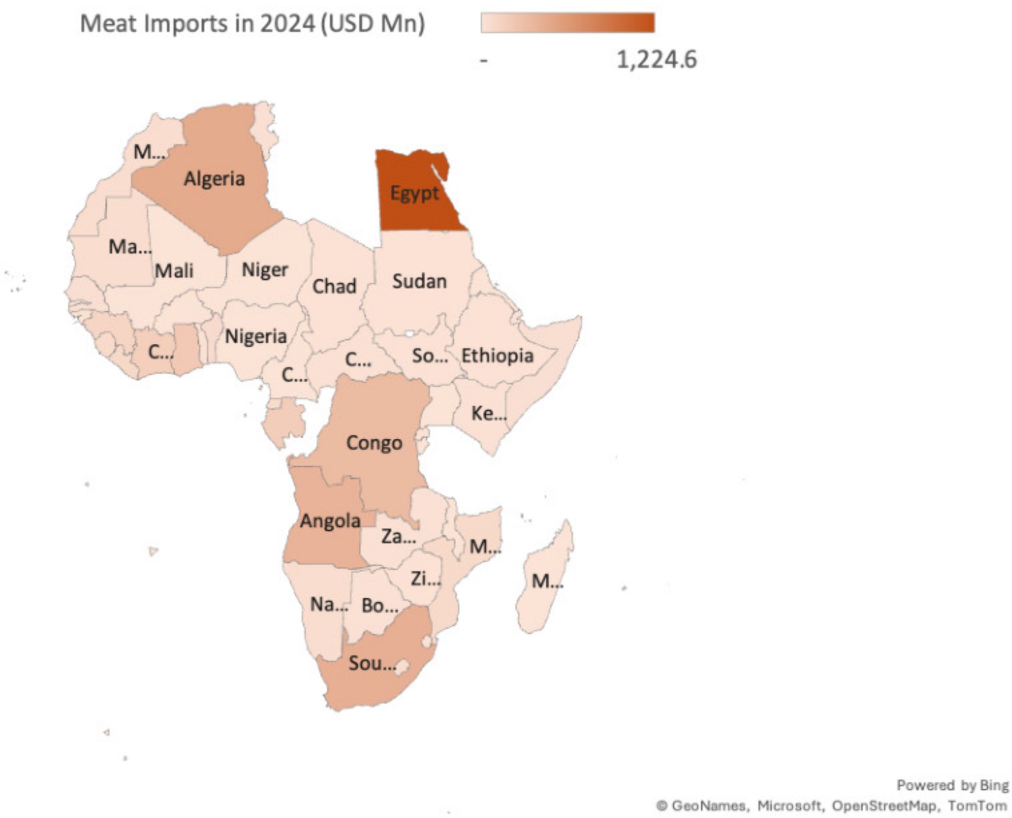
Demand for all types of meat appears to be driven primarily by urban populations in both African regions, with urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa projected to face the steepest rise in consumption. Beef, veal and poultry meat constitute the majority of this projected demand. These rises in demand are particularly consequential when contrasted with uncertainity regarding a corresponding supply increase.

Meat production utilizes a significant volume of water which may further constrain many African countries as climate change and disagreements over water sharing inject uncertainity into future water supplies. Insufficient water supply has already led to reduced herd sizes for countries such as Morocco and Algeria as stated above.

The figures below illustrate the distribution of livestock and meat imports by African countries.

Figure 16: Africa Livestock and Meat Imports 2024





Source: ITC Trade Map

On aggregate, the value of meat imports was three times that of livestock imports, at 4,967.0 USD Mn against 1,647.6 USD Mn. The former is also more distributed across North, Central, West and South Africa compared to the livestock market which is mainly concentrated in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and South Africa.

The tables below compare Pakistan and India's market penetration in Africa's livestock and meat imports.

Table 19: Pakistan and India's share in Africa's livestock imports

	African Livestock imports	India's share in Africa's imports	Pakistan's share in Africa's imports
Value (USD Mn)	1,647.5	0.1	0.4
Share	100%	0.0%	0.0%
Composition of Trade	Bovine animals, Sheep, Poultry, Camels	Insignificant exports	Insignificant exports

Source: ITC Trade Map

Table 20: Pakistan and India's share in Africa's meat imports

	African Meat imports	India's share in Africa's imports	Pakistan's share in Africa's imports
Value (USD Mn)	4,967.1	759.3	0.0
Share	100%	15.3%	0.0%
Composition of Trade	Mostly frozen meats and cuts of fowls & bovines	Frozen boneless bovine meat & bovine organs & offal	Insignificant exports

Source: ITC Trade Map

Neither India nor Pakistan hold any noteworthy share in Africa's livestock imports, which mainly constitute cattle, sheep, fowls and camels. In India's case, this is partly owed to cultural pressures against meat consumption. In Pakistan's case, livestock exports, including bovine, sheep and goat, have been restricted since 2013 as a price control measure since the export of animals across the Afghan border threatened to drive up meat prices and input costs for industries such as leather, at the time the ban was imposed[46]. However, livestock populations have been steadily recovering since then which presents the opportunity for exports of surplus stock[47].

Meat exports, however, are a different story. India has a 15.3% market share in Africa, with de-boned frozen bovine meat making up most of India's export offerings. In contrast, Pakistan has no market share in Africa despite overall meat exports reaching 517.2 USD Mn in 2024, mostly to the Gulf market. Other large meat suppliers to Africa include Brazil, which has a considerable lead over other countries, the United States, Spain and Poland.

46. https://globaltradealert.org/intervention/17801
47. https://gallup.com.pk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PR3-Livestock.pdf

The table below lists Africa's imports of meat which registered an import value of at least 100 USD Mn in 2024.

Table 21: Africa top meat imports (USD Mn)

Product code	Product label	India's Exports to Africa 2024	Pakistan's exports to Africa 2024	Africa's imports from World 2024	Pakistan's exports to World 2024
'020714	Frozen cuts and edible offal of fowls of the species Gallus domesticus	0.0	-	1,367.9	1.6
'020230	Frozen, boneless meat of bovine animals	746.6	-	1,270.0	14.9
'020712	Frozen fowls of the species Gallus domesticus, not cut in pieces	-	-	608.8	0.2
'020622	Frozen edible bovine livers	10.6	-	241.5	0.1
'020130	Fresh or chilled bovine meat, boneless	5.7	-	233.4	0.3
'020629	Frozen edible bovine offal (excl. tongues and livers)	28.4	0.2	191.1	6.7
'020110	Carcases or half-carcases of bovine animals, fresh or chilled	-	-	117.0	366.5

Source: ITC Trade Map

The bulk of African demand is concentrated along frozen or chilled meat, particularly for chickens and bovines. Pakistan does not have any significant presence across these top lines in the African market. India, by comparison, holds a majority stake in Africa's imports of frozen de-boned bovine meat, with most of these exports consisting of buffalo meat. Indian presence in other lines is much less significant. It is apparent that Pakistan has significant room for ramping up exports of value-added meats to Africa, particularly frozen and de-boned cuts. Currently, Pakistan does not have capacities comparable to India for large-scale deboning processes or cold storage and transport of meat. However, investments in upgrading the country's cold chain infrastructure, disease testing capacity and slaughtering processes had begun in late 2025 with the aim of entering Malaysia's halal meat market[48].

For exporting frozen meat, Pakistan will have to navigate a plurality of regulatory systems. Countries such as South Africa, for example, require abattoirs exporting meat to South Africa to be approved by the National Executive Officer of South Africa[49], whilst others such as Algeria require sanitary/veterinary inspection of animals and animal products at the border[50].

However, given that Pakistan has verifiable exports of meat to the Gulf should build confidence in the country's ability to satisfy international regulatory requirements. The current sector-wide initiatives aimed at ramping up halal meat exports to Malaysia also serve as a strong signal of the country's status as a reliable supplier of compliant meat. The status of India as a major player in the African frozen meat market gives further reason to believe that Pakistan can emerge as a viable supplier pending infrastructure, regulatory and logistics upgrades.

48. https://www.arabnews.com/node/2623394/pakistan
49. https://www.gov.za/services/services-organisations/import/import-fresh-meat#:~:text=It%20is%20your%20responsibility%20as,Standard%20Bank%20of%20South%20Africa
50. https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Country%20Report_Algiers_Algeria_12-31-2021.pdf

4.5: Other Sectors

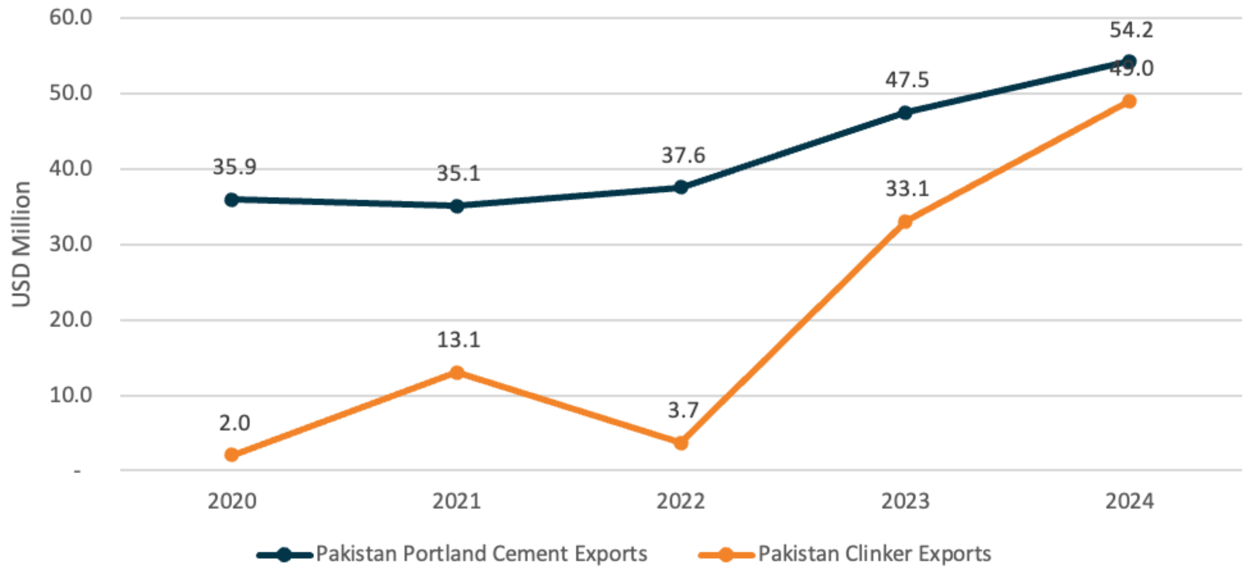
This section explores other products presenting significant current or future export potential, particularly ones concentrated on lines too few to warrant a separate section. The products identified in this section include cement, clinker, rice and surgical instruments.

Cement and Clinker

Africa's surging population and urbanization feed into demand for construction materials, particularly cement, with Rasmussen et. al projecting cement demand to surge by 230% by 2050[51]. Multi-billion dollar infrastructure projects such as the Bishoftu International Airport in Ethiopia, LAPSSET corridor in Kenya and the Grand Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo among others ensure sustained cement demand in the short and medium terms.

Pakistan's growing cement exports in recent years have reflected Africa's increased appetite, with the continent consuming around one-third of Pakistan's cement and clinker exports.

Figure 17: Pakistan's Cement and Clinker exports to Africa



Source: ITC Trade Map

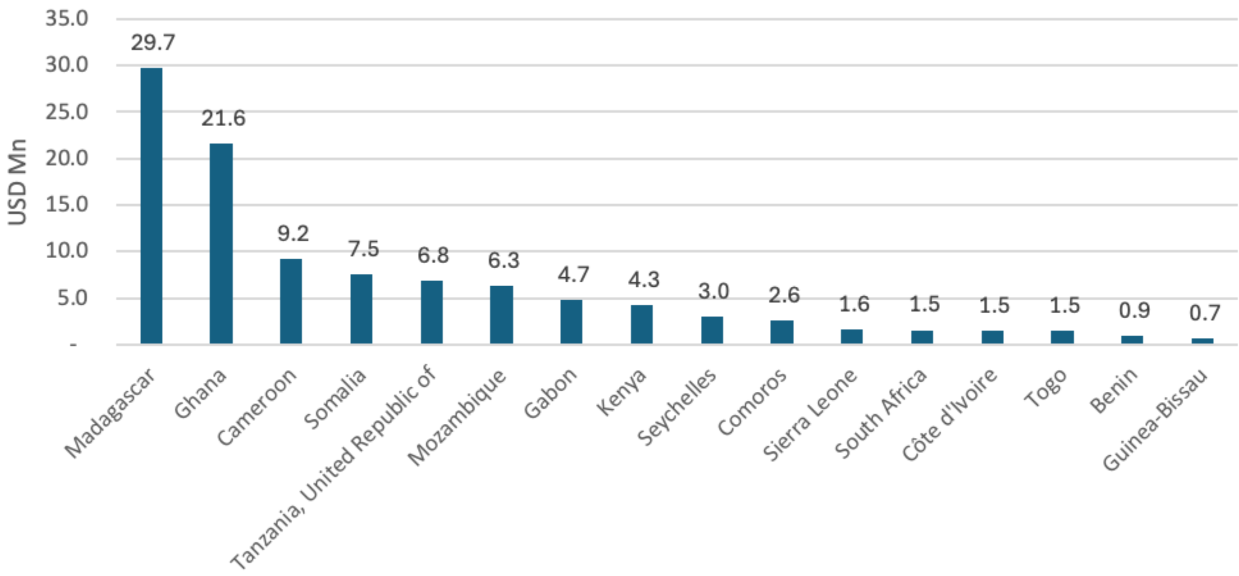
Pakistan's cement exports have increased to 54.2 USD Mn at a CAGR of 8.6% whilst clinker exports have surged to 49 USD Mn at a CAGR of 89.0% since 2020. That said, Pakistan's share in Africa's cement and clinker market is still small, at 3.4% and 4.4% respectively.

India, in contrast, virtually has no share in the African market, a consequence of redirecting production towards domestic consumption.

51. https://www.arabnews.com/node/2623394/pakistan

The figure below illustrates Pakistan's African export markets:

Figure 18: Pakistan's cement and clinker export destinations



Source: ITC Trade Map

As is observed above, nearly half of Pakistan's exports to the continent are concentrated in Madagascar and Ghana. However, exports to other significant markets such as Mali, Cote d' Ivoire and Libya present with significant room for expansion. Pakistan's largest competitor states in the continent are Egypt, Türkiye, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates.

Much of Pakistan's cement exports to Africa are supplied via the southern plants in Balochistan and Karachi which operate at significantly less capacities compared to the northern plants. One explanatory factor for this is the difficulty and costs associated with transporting cement across long distances from production plants and ports.

Moving forward, scaling will hinge on investments in southern plant capacities and improved port logistics pertaining to the mechanized loading and unloading of cement cargoes.

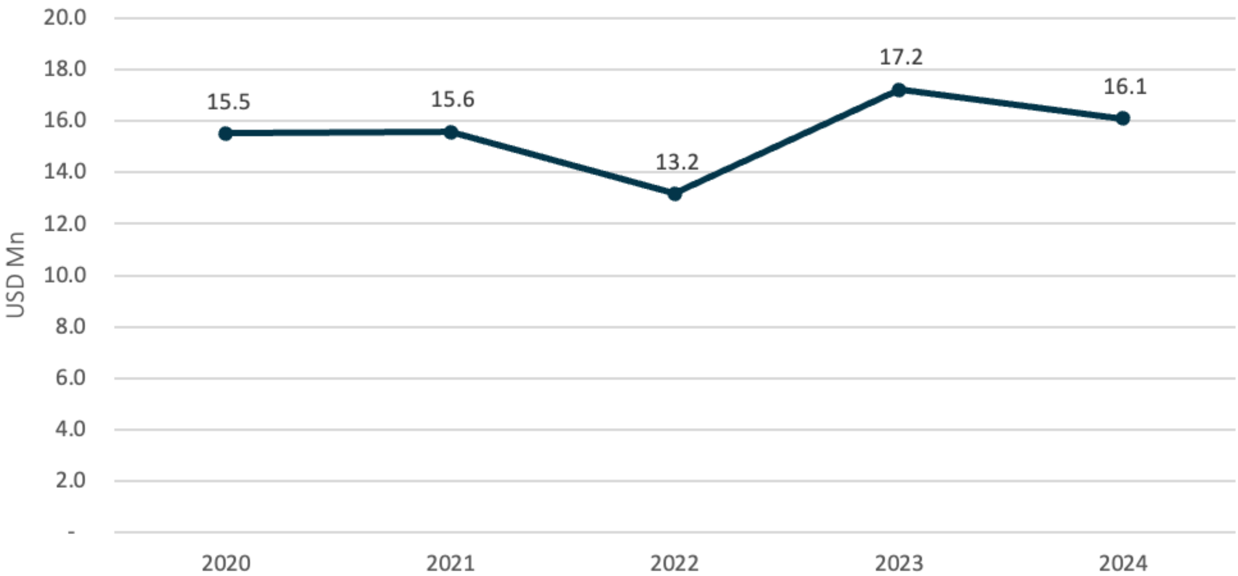
Additionally, newer green cement products such as Supplementary Cementitious Materials (SCMs) which can substitute a portion of the cement volume in a concrete mix in service of lower carbon costs hold the possibility to revitalize a sluggish global cement industry[52]. R&D Investments in diversifying towards low-carbon cement holds significant future-proofing potential for Pakistan in Africa, particularly as the continent already has some SCM initiatives in the pipeline[53].

Surgical Instruments

Pakistan has a mature and historically well-regarded surgical instruments sector, representing one of the largest non-textile export categories for the country. However, in recent years exports have hovered around the 440 USD Mn mark, with exports to Africa constituting a miniscule 3.6% of this number in 2024. Naturally, Africa emerges as a destination offering a way out of stagnation.

52. https://www.mckinsey.com.br/industries/engineering-construction-and-building-materials/our-insights/the-future-cement-industry-a-cementitious-golden-age
53. https://www.afrisam.co.za/eco-readymix/

Figure 19: Pakistan Surgical Instruments Exports to Africa for HS-901890



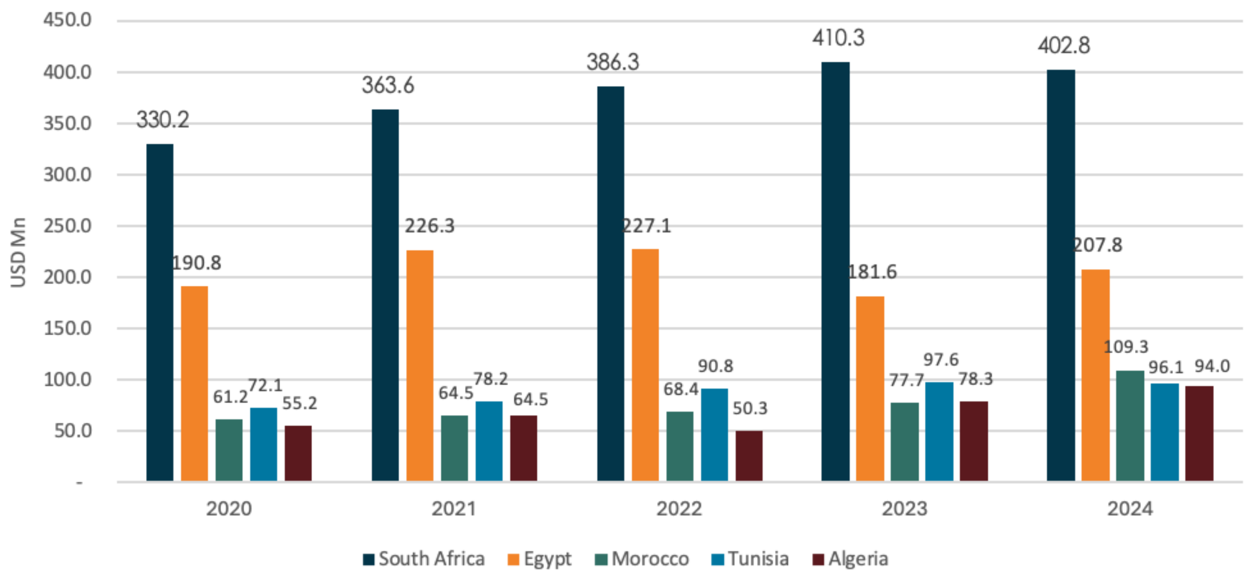
Source: ITC Trade Map

Pakistan's exports to Africa have stagnated since 2020, with most merchandise flowing to South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Tanzania and Algeria. The country's main competitors in the continent include China, the United States, Germany, France and India.

Pakistan's surgical instrument manufacturing has been beset by long-standing issues with brand awareness and per-unit returns. Much of what is domestically manufactured is shipped overseas to buyers, mostly in Germany and the United States, who brand the instruments and perform quality control, among other value-additions, and re-export them for higher margins. Some of what Pakistan manufactures likely ends up in Africa under European brand names.

African countries imported 1,518.1 USD Mn worth of surgical equipment in 2024, with the top five importers constituting almost 60% of the inflows.

Figure 20: Top HS-901890 Surgical Instruments Importers in Africa



Source: ITC Trade Map

The above figures are particularly striking when the general youthfulness of the African continent is considered, with even the oldest African countries such as Tunisia and South Africa sporting median ages in the early 30s, significantly below advanced economies.

Pakistan's surgical instrument manufacturers are well poised to compete in the African market given long-time accrued manufacturing expertise, experience in catering to high-value densely regulated markets in North America and Europe and multiple international compliance accreditations including ISO, CE and FDA. Export flows in the 1-2 USD Mn range are already oriented towards North, South and East Africa, with the latter two having-been long identified as viable markets[54].

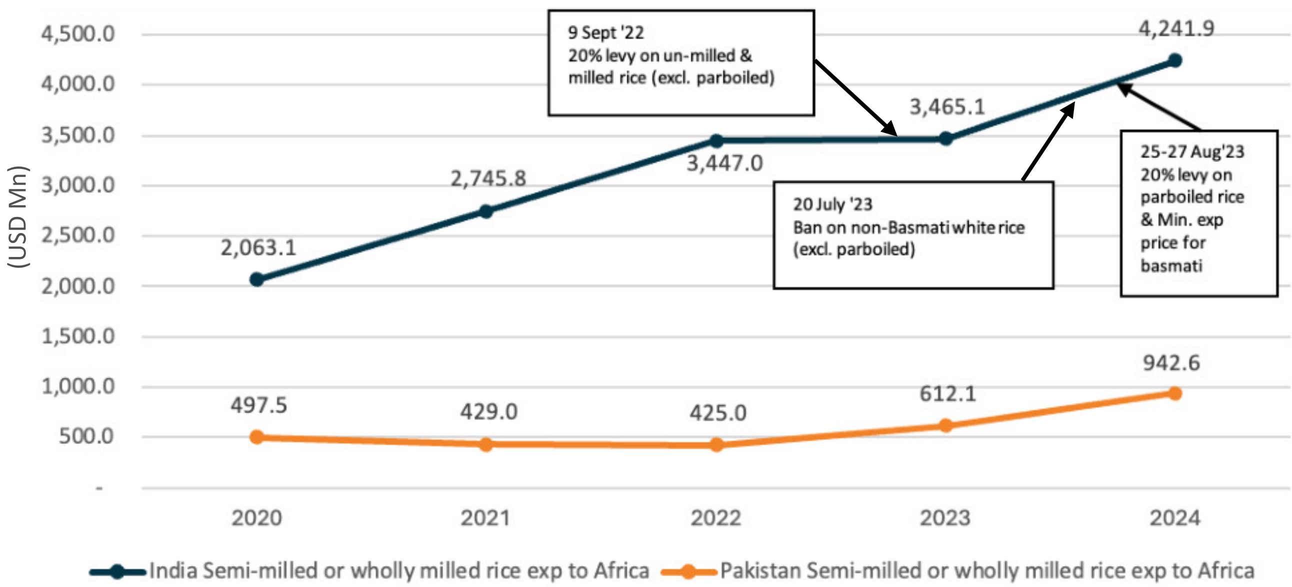
With product quality, certifications and regulatory mettle already tested, the remaining bottlenecks for exports to the continent involve improved domestic logistics from the Sialkot cluster to the ports and direct maritime shipping links along with improved brand quality and awareness.

Rice

Pakistan's rice exports, in recent years, have surged with exports to Africa reflecting the broader trend. The explanatory factors range from improved market access to targeted rice exhibitions to expanding domestic production to tentative export bans by India.

Whilst Pakistani rice is generally held to have a qualitative advantage over Indian rice, with the latter pulling away on price and scale.

Figure 21: Pakistan and India's rice exports to Africa and India's various export restrictions



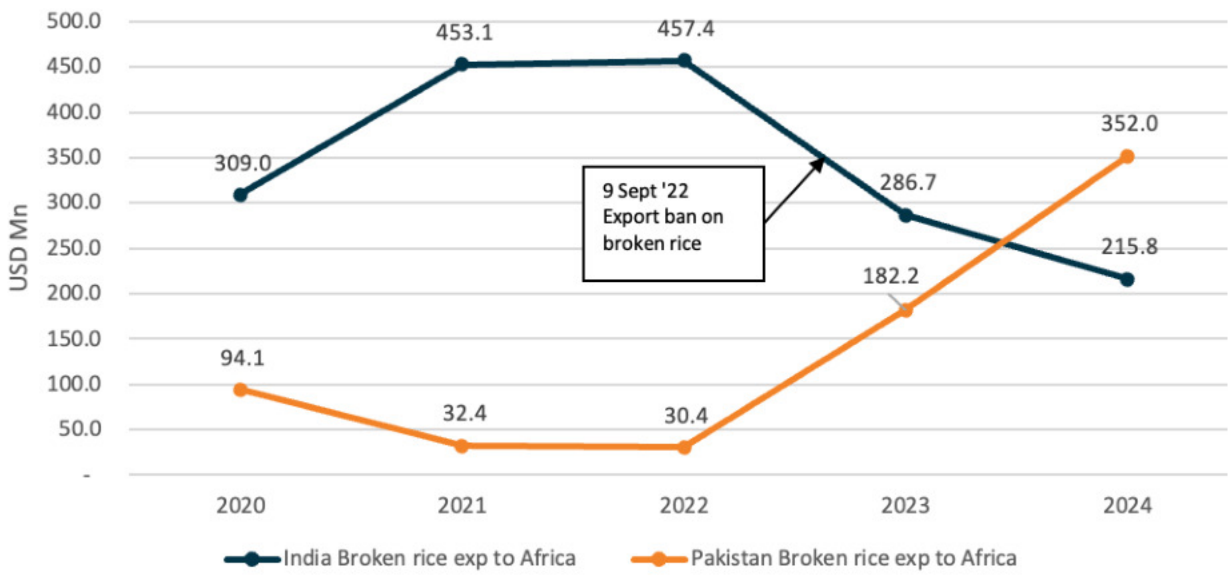
Source: ITC Trade Map

The figure above plots the trend of Pakistan and India's semi and wholly milled rice exports to Africa along with annotations detailing the various export controls India instituted since 2022 owing to disruptions in domestic production.

54. https://www.pbc.org.pk/research/enhancing-the-competitiveness-of-pakistans-surgical-instruments-industry/

As is observed, despite the multiple levies, export bans and minimum export prices, India's exports rose from 3,465.1 USD Mn in 2023 to 4,241.9 USD Mn in 2024 owing to various factors including non-concurrent restrictions on different rice varieties leading to export composition shift, front loading in anticipation of restrictions and a rise in global rice prices among others. Concurrently, Pakistan's rice exports have also risen from 425.0 USD Mn in 2022 to 942.6 USD Mn in 2024.

Figure 22: Pakistan and India's broken rice exports to Africa



Source: ITC Trade Map

Pakistan and India's export trend in broken rice follow the expected trajectory subsequent to India's export ban in late 2022. India's falling market share coincides with a rise in Pakistan's, indicating the latter's entry into Africa's newly vacated market.

Whilst India's absence from the export market proved to be a windfall for Pakistan's own exports, the former has, since late 2024, removed much of the restrictions and price controls that had come to favour Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan's rice exports have subsequently plunged, with Basmati and non-Basmati rice exports falling by 6.6% and 50.8%, respectively, in the first seven months of FY26, compared to the same period in FY25[55]. This is partly due to a recession in Pakistan's recently gained market share as well as a drop in global rice prices owing to a supply surge.

India holds multiple distinct endowments over Pakistan, allowing for its market leadership. The country is able to drive down prices via better logistics and reduced transport times, scale, significant government support, greater yield per hectare and a larger diaspora driving demand.

However, there is reason to be optimistic since Pakistan has now made inroads into the African market, with Pakistani rice gaining unprecedented exposure to African traders and consumers. Remedying cost-irritants presents the country with significant upside potential over the medium and long terms.

55. https://www.pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/Pakistans-Trade-Data-in-Goods-July-2025-January-2026-Vs.-July-2024-January-2025.pdf

Chapter 5

Stakeholder Engagements

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Stakeholder Engagements

Any market analysis study on a continent marked by a plurality of economic, political, national and cultural dimensions such as Africa requires direct engagement with the relevant stakeholders already navigating these realities in the continent. As part of the requisite due-diligence, stakeholders represented by appointed trade officers and attaches, exporters and experts with insight into the African space were interviewed regarding the opportunities and challenges faced by Pakistan in the African market and their insights have been distilled into this section.

Many of the concerns and feedback relayed by the interviewees overlapped. The most salient are included below:

A lack of orientation towards the African market

A common observation noted amongst interviewees was a lack of interest in the African market, informed partially through outdated misperceptions on African purchasing power and development. Additionally, issues were noted with professionalism in business and social conduct with some exporters in their dealings with African agents.

Meaningfully catering to a part of Africa's 700 Bn USD import market requires an acknowledgement of the viability of the market in the first place.

Recommendations:

- Initiate a greater and sustained push towards sponsoring delegations from African countries to Pakistan to help build B2B rapport.

- Hold diversity and professional conduct training sessions for exporters and business-professionals interacting with African representatives.

Inefficient Logistics and Transport Infrastructure

Respondents noted that much of Pakistan's Africa-bound trade was routed via transshipments through Gulf ports. This adds time, costs and increases the likelihood of spoilage and phytosanitary violations, with the last two being of particular concern for Pakistan's rice exports.

Additionally, there was concern pertaining to Pakistan's steep freight charges and port tariffs along with deficiencies in mechanized loading of certain types of cargo, including cement and clinker.

Recommendations:

- Expedite the execution of the recently discussed direct shipping routes between Karachi and Mombasa and Karachi and Djibouti.

- Upgrade mechanization at port terminals and rationalize port tariffs to better compete with regional players.

A tenuous commercial and diplomatic presence

Multiple respondents contrasted Pakistan's narrow and limited trade dealings with India's ubiquitous presence via extensive diaspora networks, diplomatic and business exchanges, vast investments and joint ventures in the continent. The depth and breadth of the Indian approach translate into better trade and economic outcomes in many key African markets, especially as the country often bundles its exports with investment, infrastructure projects and long-term supply contracts.

Recommendations:

- A renewed push towards regular diplomatic engagements that can address frictions in trade has immense signalling power towards the Pakistani private sector.
- Target greater participation in trade fairs in Africa but also in those attended by a significant number of African delegates, such as ones in Europe and the Gulf.
- In lieu of capital-intensive investments, pursue joint ventures leveraging Pakistan's comparative expertise in domains including healthcare, textiles and IT.

Inadequate Trade Financing

An enduring structural constraint brought up was Pakistan's lack of trade financing compared to the aggressive credit lines extended by India's EXIM bank to importers in Africa. The latter's external financing even extends to using Letters of Credit via its EXIM bank to fund development projects in Africa.

One respondent recounted an instance of this disparity where the Indian EXIM bank offered tractor importers in Africa 50% buyer's credit with convenient payback periods, a facility not offered in Pakistan's tractor offerings to the continent.

Additionally, one respondent noted that certain exporters, in lieu of domestic export credit insurance, obtain letters of credit from traders in Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai, a practice that also contributes to costs.

Sufficient trade financing allows for export scaling and penetration into higher value sectors, including engineered and capital goods.

Recommendations:

- Sign re-insurance treaties between EXIM Pakistan and global reinsurers such as the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) in order to expand underwriting capacity for exporters.
- Expand product offerings to include buyer's credit, working capital finance and sector specific export funds for pharmaceuticals, IT services, Engineered goods and value-added foods.

A business-adverse visa and mobility regime

The lack of direct flights and a facilitative visa regime with major economies, such as those in North Africa, including Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, was identified by multiple respondents as a barrier. One respondent noted that Pakistan's mobility constraint was especially deleterious here since, unlike for many Western transactions, business trust in many African countries is tied to physical presence.

Compared to regional competitors, business professionals from Pakistan wanting to visit certain African economies lack e-Visa facilities and contend with greater rates of rejection. Often, professionals are required to travel to Islamabad in order to manually initiate the Visa procedure, a process that introduces additional friction.

Additionally, due to the lack of direct flights with much of Africa, many business meetings take place in third-country locations such as Dubai.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize G2G cooperation with partner countries, especially North African economies, to introduce reciprocal business-friendly e-Visa facilities for Pakistani exporters and investors.

- Expand diplomatic missions throughout the continent to directly liaise with local authorities for bilateral mobility enhancement.

- Conduct more feasibility studies for direct flights between Pakistan and underserved destinations in Africa.

Low tariff impact

Certain respondents placed Pakistan's African tariff burden below other depressants for impact on export performance. The reasoning included a comparative assessment with India's robust performance in spite of similar tariff exposure as Pakistan. Respondents focused more on non-tariff barriers including logistics, business networking, trade financing, mobility restrictions, and diplomatic and commercial presence.

Recommendations:

- Ameliorating the aforementioned irritants to export growth should take precedence over entering into free trade pacts solely to negotiate tariff relief.

Establishing and operationalizing joint business councils

One respondent noted the signing of a memorandum of understanding for a joint business council in a North African country that has largely remain inoperative.

Other joint councils in the continent are either yet to be formally inaugurated or are at varying levels of activity, with certain councils, such as the one in Senegal, holding its last session in 2023[56]. These business councils can facilitate Pakistan through many of the Africa-specific challenges that constrain trade, including business networking, non-tariff barrier lobbying, market research and regular liaising between representatives.

- Establish more joint-business councils throughout un-served countries in Africa, such as Nigeria.

- Re-activate dormant business councils in countries such as Algeria and Senegal.

56. "Agricultural products" refers to those lines included in the Agricultural Products Group on the ITC website.

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