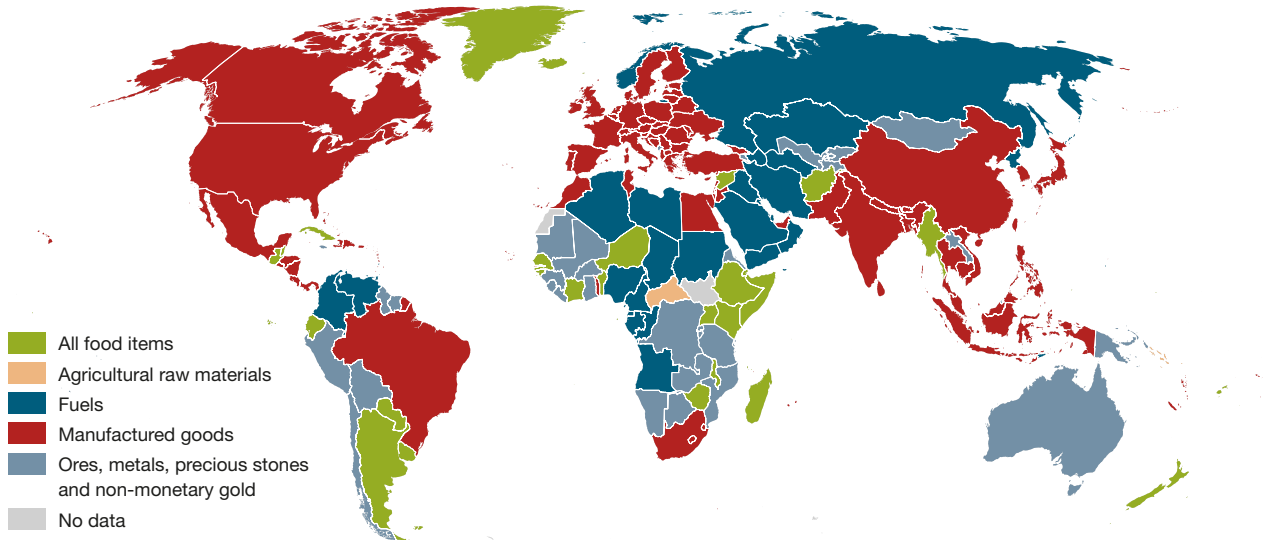




# Fact sheet #3: Trade structure by product

**Map 1 | Main export products, 2016**



## Concepts and definitions

The breakdown of merchandise trade by product group is based on the entries in the customs declarations that are coded in accordance with a globally harmonized classification system, called the Harmonized System. The values of the individual customs declarations have been summed up to the level of product group, error-checked and submitted to the United Nations Statistics Division for integration in the UN Comtrade database (United Nations, 2017a).

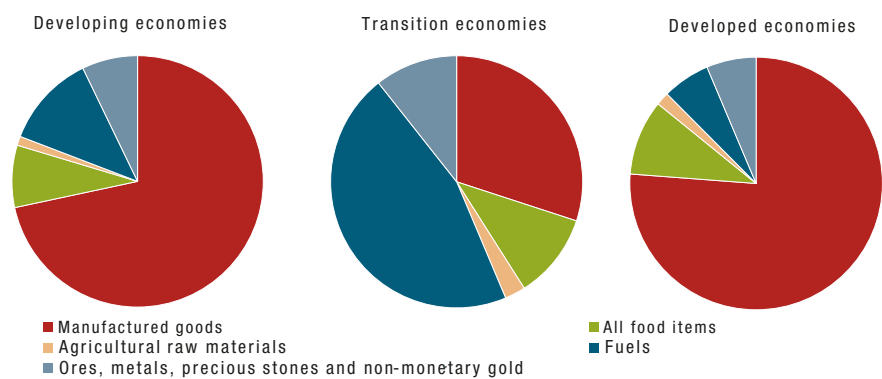
The UN Comtrade database contains product breakdowns based on the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC). These have been obtained by conversion of the raw data coded in Harmonized System and constitute the main source of the figures presented in this section. For correspondence between SITC codes and the five broad product groups presented in this section, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2017, annex 6.2.

## Regional specialization patterns

Economies have specialized their exports by different groups of products. In 2016, for many developed economies and developing economies in Southern and Eastern Asia, manufactured goods represented the most exported product group. Many transition economies and developing economies in Western Asia and North and Central Africa relied mainly on fuels. Food was strongly represented in the exports of some economies in South America and Eastern Africa; and ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold in the exports of several Southern and Western African and Central Asian economies.

In developing economies, manufactured goods accounted for 72 percent of total exports – almost as much as in developed economies. In transition economies, only one third of exports were manufactured goods, while fuels accounted for almost one half.

**Figure 1 | Export structure by product group, 2016 (Percentage)**

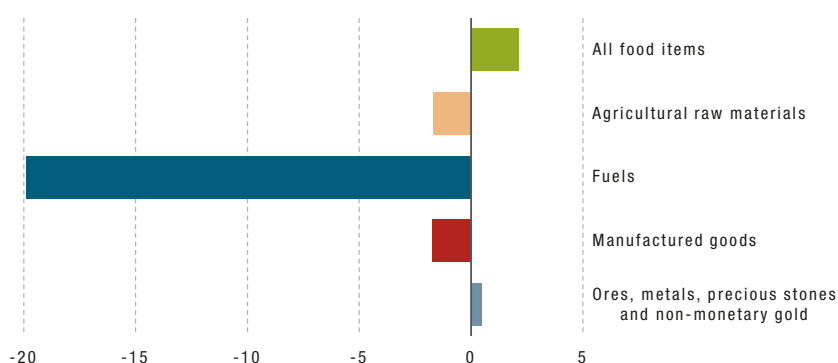




### Decline in trade at the level of product groups

The continuing decrease in global trade in 2016 (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2017, section 1.1) was reflected in negative annual growth rates particularly for trade in fuels. In 2016, global fuels exports reached only 80 per cent of their value in 2015. Trade in manufactured goods and agricultural raw materials decreased to a much smaller extent, by 2 per cent each. By contrast, trade in food recorded a slight increase (2 per cent), while trade in ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold remained constant.

**Figure 2** | Annual growth rate of exports by product group, 2016 (Percentage)



Many **developing economies in Africa and in America** export mainly primary goods



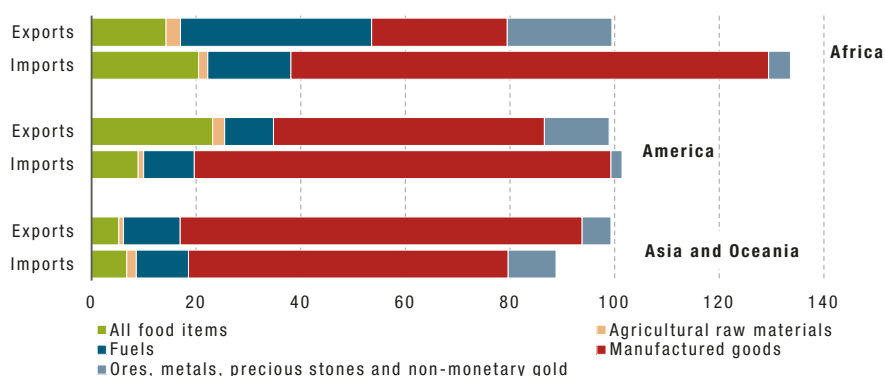
**Fuels exports** dropped by **20%** worldwide in 2016



### What do developing economies trade with others?

A breakdown of extra-trade by product group shows that developing economies in Africa and America imported much higher value of manufactured goods from the rest of the world than they exported. While in America this was offset by a positive balance in trade in food and in ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold, in Africa it caused an overall extra-trade deficit. Extra-trade of developing economies in Asia and Oceania recorded a slight surplus resulting from higher exports of manufactured goods than imports.

**Figure 3** | Developing economies' extra-trade structure, 2016 (Percentage of exports)



**Trade in food** increased slightly: **+2%**



**Africa's imports of manufactured goods** more than **3 1/2 times** higher than exports

