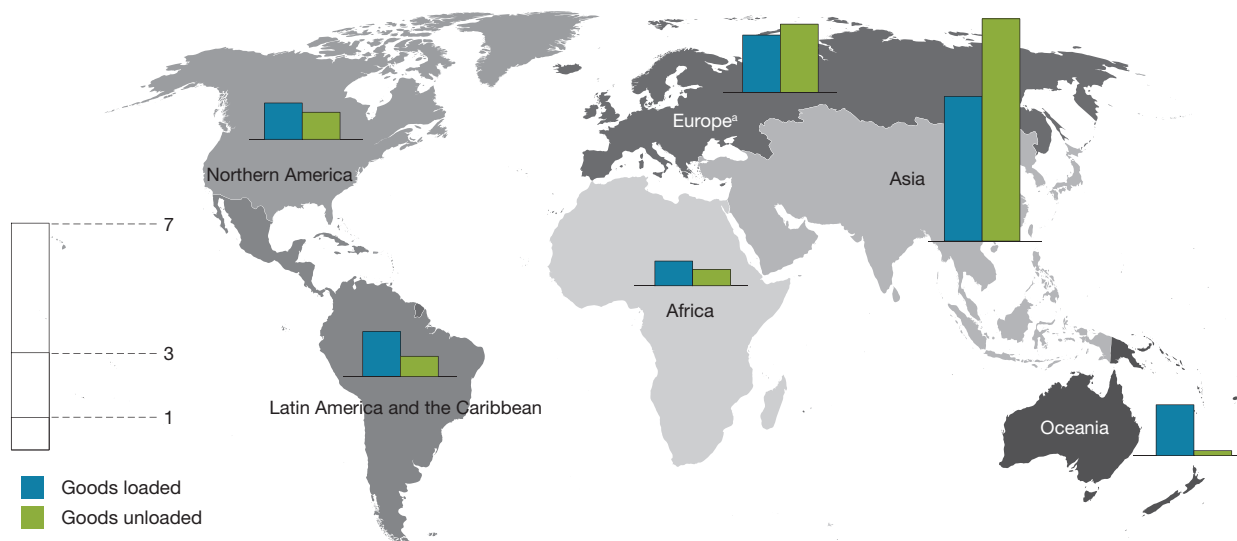




Fact sheet #13: World seaborne trade

Map 1 | Tonnage loaded and unloaded, 2019
(Billions of tons)



^a Including the Russian Federation and the French overseas departments.

Concepts and definitions

The figures on seaborne trade in this section measure the volumes, in metric tons, of goods loaded and unloaded in the world's seaports for international shipment. Cabotage and transshipments are not included.

Goods loaded for international shipment are assumed to be exports, while goods unloaded from ships are assumed to be imports. The seaborne trade balance measures the difference between the volumes of loaded and unloaded goods.

Dry cargo refers to cargo that is usually not carried in tankers, such as dry bulks (e.g. coal, ores, grains), pallets, bags, crates, and containers. "Other" tanker trade refers to tanker trade, excluding crude oil. It includes refined petroleum products, gas and chemicals.

The data presented in this section have been compiled from various sources, including country reports as well as port industry and other specialist websites.

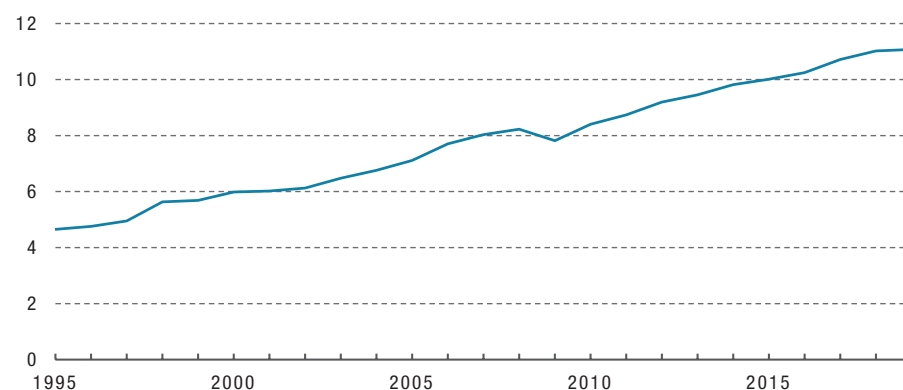
Trends and geography of world seaborne trade

Growth in international maritime trade stalled in 2019, reaching its lowest rate since the global financial crisis of 2008–2009. Maritime trade volumes expanded by only 0.5 per cent in 2019, down from 2.8 per cent in 2018 to reach a total of 11.08 billion tons.

In line with Asian economies' strong contribution to global trade (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, section 1.1) and their high integration into global shipping networks (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, section 5.3), Asia is by far the largest seaborne trading region. In 2019, Asian seaports handled 4.5 billion tons of goods loaded, and 6.9 billion tons of goods unloaded. The other continents recorded much smaller volumes.

Of the 11.1 billion tons shipped internationally in 2019, 7.9 billion tons were dry cargo. Over time, dry cargo has expanded its share, now accounting for over two thirds of total maritime trade volumes.

Figure 1 | Goods loaded worldwide
(Billions of tons)

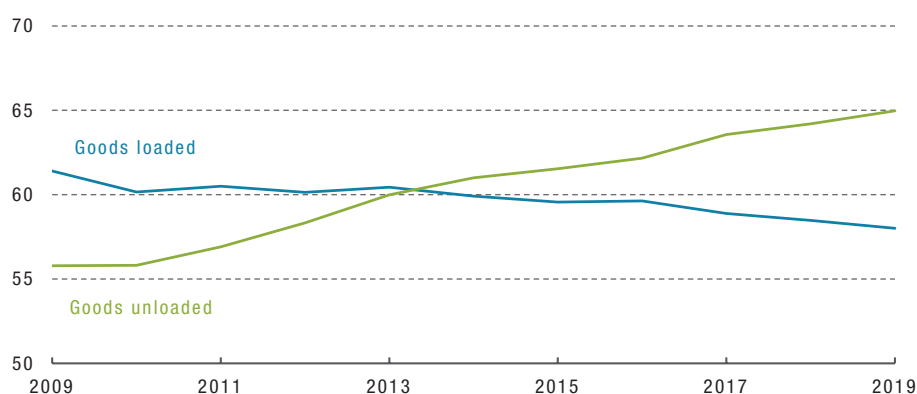




Contribution of developing economies

In 2019, developing economies still accounted for the largest share of global seaborne trade, both in terms of exports and imports. They loaded 58 per cent and unloaded 65 per cent of the world total. With a volume of 4.3 billion tons loaded and 6.1 billion tons unloaded, Asian and Oceanian developing economies contributed most to that share. While developing economies remain the main maritime trade centres, the structure of their trade has changed. Since 2014, their share of world imports has exceeded their share of world exports.

Figure 2 | Seaborne trade of developing economies
(Percentage of corresponding world tonnage)



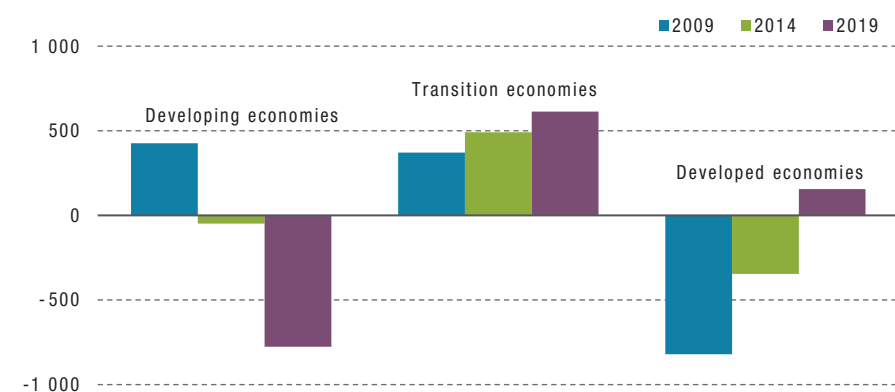
Developments in seaborne trade balances

Developing economies' declining contribution of seaborne trade exports and increasing contribution of seaborne trade imports is reflected in a steady decrease in their trade balance. Their balance changed from a surplus of 433 million tons in 2009 into a deficit of 49 million tons in 2014, which deepened to 776 million tons in 2019. This development was mainly driven by a widening of the deficit in Asian developing economies.

Over the last ten years, transition economies recorded a growth of their surplus from 412 to 614 million tons. For developed economies, a deficit of 820 million tons in 2009 has, over time, turned into a surplus of 155 million tons in 2019.¹

¹ For further analyses on this topic, see UNCTAD (2020d).

Figure 3 | Seaborne trade balance
(Millions of tons)



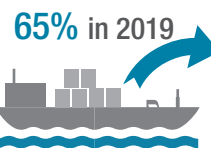
For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, annex 6.4.

seaborne trade growth slowed significantly:

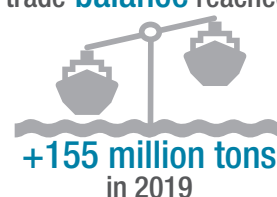


62% of all goods unloaded and over 40% of all goods loaded in Asian seaports

Developing economies' share of seaborne trade imports rose to



Developed economies' seaborne trade balance reached



**Table 1** Total seaborne trade by group of economies

Group of economies	Loaded			Unloaded			Balance	
	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume	
	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)	
	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019
World^a	9 816	11 076	0.5	9 720	11 083	0.6	96	-7
Developing economies	5 881	6 425	-0.3	5 930	7 201	1.8	-49	-776
Developing economies: Africa	738	762	-0.1	445	504	0.5	293	258
Developing economies: America	1 301	1 386	0.1	572	622	-2.6	729	765
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	3 842	4 276	-0.4	4 913	6 075	2.4	-1 071	-1 798
Transition economies	592	716	0.4	100	102	2.7	491	614
Developed economies	3 344	3 935	1.9	3 690	3 780	-1.7	-346	155

^a Annual world totals of goods loaded and unloaded are not necessarily the same, given that goods loaded in one calendar year may reach their port of destination in the next calendar year.

Table 2 Seaborne trade by cargo type and group of economies

Crude oil

Group of economies	Loaded			Unloaded			Balance	
	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume	
	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)	
	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019
World^a	1 712	1 860	-1.1	1 850	2 033	-0.8	-138	-173
Developing economies	1 438	1 423	-3.2	885	1 119	0.2	552	304
Developing economies: Africa	304	293	-1.3	37	39	0.5	267	254
Developing economies: America	233	204	1.8	65	48	1.6	167	156
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	901	926	-4.9	783	1 032	0.1	118	-106
Transition economies	152	194	-4.9	0	1	151.5	152	193
Developed economies	122	243	17.8	964	914	-2.0	-843	-671

^a Annual world totals of goods loaded and unloaded are not necessarily the same, given that goods loaded in one calendar year may reach their port of destination in the next calendar year.

Other tanker trade

Group of economies	Loaded			Unloaded			Balance	
	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume	
	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)	
	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019
World^a	1 122	1 308	-0.9	1 088	1 329	-0.7	34	-21
Developing economies	621	760	-1.8	565	851	1.5	57	-91
Developing economies: Africa	74	70	-0.8	71	99	-0.6	3	-29
Developing economies: America	76	82	-7.2	100	139	-7.0	-23	-57
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	471	608	-1.2	394	613	4.0	77	-5
Transition economies	37	41	9.3	4	5	12.8	33	36
Developed economies	463	507	-0.1	519	473	-4.5	-55	34

^a Annual world totals of goods loaded and unloaded are not necessarily the same, given that goods loaded in one calendar year may reach their port of destination in the next calendar year.



Dry cargo

Group of economies	Loaded			Unloaded			Balance	
	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume		Annual growth rate	Volume	
	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)		(Percentage)	(Millions of tons)	
	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019	2019	2014	2019
World^a	6 983	7 907	1.1	6 782	7 720	1.2	201	187
Developing economies	3 822	4 241	1.0	4 480	5 230	2.2	-658	-989
Developing economies: Africa	359	399	0.9	337	366	0.8	22	33
Developing economies: America	992	1 100	0.3	407	435	-1.5	585	665
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	2 470	2 743	1.3	3 736	4 429	2.7	-1 265	-1 687
Transition economies	403	481	2.0	96	96	1.6	307	385
Developed economies	2 758	3 185	1.2	2 207	2 394	-1.0	552	791

^a Annual world totals of goods loaded and unloaded are not necessarily the same, given that goods loaded in one calendar year may reach their port of destination in the next calendar year.

Table 3 | **Development of goods loaded worldwide by type of cargo**
(Millions of tons)

Year	Total goods	Crude oil	Other tanker trade	Dry cargo
1974	3 304	1 497	335	1 472
1979	3 828	1 725	318	1 785
1984	3 364	1 079	399	1 886
1989	3 940	1 260	468	2 212
1994	4 485	1 498	509	2 478
1999	5 683	1 553	532	3 598
2004	6 758	1 770	546	4 442
2009	7 818	1 710	931	5 177
2014	9 816	1 712	1 122	6 983
2019	11 076	1 860	1 308	7 907