Mission Statement
“Leveraging on partnerships and innovative technologies, to produce and disseminate relevant, quality, timely statistics and spatial data that are fit-for-purpose in accordance with international standards and best practice”

Vision Statement
“Be a high performance institution in quality statistics delivery”

Core Values
Integrity
Excellent Performance
Accuracy
Team Work
Accountability
Transparency
Preface

International merchandise trade plays a crucial role in economic development as it binds producers and consumers located in different countries into a global economic system. In this context, availability of timely and high-quality trade statistics becomes a precondition for an in-depth analysis of the production, consumption, employment, income and overall welfare both at the country and global level. It is in that light that since its establishment, the NSA has strived to make provision of timely and quality statistics through the various publications. This publication outlines the monthly developments of Namibia’s trade in merchandise with the rest of the world during the period of April 2020.

The month of April 2020 saw Namibia’s total merchandise trade totaling N$11,134 million down by 31.9 percent from its level of N$16,341 million in the last month and even much lower (42.4%) when compared to its level of N$19,326 million recorded in the same month of 2019. This decline was reflected in both the value of exports and imports that fell by 43 percent and 18.1 percent, respectively from last month. Similarly, the value of exports and imports both declined when compared to their April 2019 levels. Subsequently, Namibia recorded a trade deficit of N$826 million compared to a surplus level of N$424 million in April 2019.

Namibia’s trade composition by partner remained skewed towards a few common countries. China emerged as Namibia’s largest export market while for the first time Zambia claimed South Africa’s position as the number one source of imports for Namibia. The composition of goods in terms of exports remained the same comprising mainly of minerals such as non-ferrous metals, non-monetary gold, metalliferous ores and metal scrap with the exception of fish and live animals, the only non-mineral products among the top five list of exports. On the other hand, imports into the country comprised mainly of non-ferrous metals, petroleum and petroleum products; metalliferous ores and metal scrap; cereals and fertilizers.
Let me take this opportunity to thank all our stakeholders who made it possible for the production of this report. I would also like to urge all our Traders and Clearing Agents to continue providing all the required information when declaring their goods as this information is vital in the production of this report. In the same vain I would like to urge our users of statistical information to send to us any comments that may enhance statistical production and contribute to the improvement of this report.

ALEX SHIMUAFENI
STATISTICIAN GENERAL & CEO
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List of Acronyms

BRIC: Brazil, Russia, India and China
CIF: Cost, Insurance and Freight
COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC: East African Community
EFTA: European Free Trade Association
EPZ: Export Processing Zone
EU: European Union
FOB: Free on Board
ROW: Rest of World
SACU: Southern African Customs Union
SADC: Southern African Development Community
VAR: Imported from Various Countries
SECTION 1: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1.1  Total Exports and Total Imports
In April 2020, the value of exports weakened, falling by 43 percent from its level of N$9,036 million in March 2020. When compared to its level of N$9,875 million in April 2019, exports dropped by 47.8 percent. The value of imports followed a similar trend, falling by 18.1 percent and 36.7 percent compared to March 2020 and April 2019 respectively. The simultaneous decline in both exports and imports affected total merchandize trade which fell 39.1 percent compared to March 2020 and also by 42.4 percent when compared to April 2019 (Chart 1).

*Chart 1: Total exports and imports April 2019 to April 2020*
1.2 Trade Balance

The trade balance compares the country’s trade in terms of earnings (exports) and expenditure (imports\(^1\)) with the rest of the world. In April 2020, Namibia registered a trade deficit of N$826 million after it posted a revised surplus of N$1,731 million in March 2020. Namibia’s trade deficit persisted since May 2019 to February 2020 (Chart 2).

*Chart 2: Trade balance, April 2019 to March 2020*

\(^{1}\) The value of imports here is denoted as negative to show an outflow.
SECTION 2: DIRECTION OF TRADE (DOT)

2.1 Top Five (5) Export Markets

In April 2020, Namibia’s export market comprised mainly of countries such as China, South Africa, Spain, Singapore and Belgium (Chart 3). Combined, these five countries accounted for 82.3 percent of Namibian exports to the rest of the world, reflecting a highly concentrated export market. This group of countries appears to be the regular top five export destination for Namibia over past twelve months except for Singapore.

*Chart 3: Export market share by top five countries*

In April 2020, China was the main export market, absorbing 42.8 percent of all goods exported ahead of South Africa which settled in the second place, absorbing 20.8 percent of total exports. Spain claimed the third position, accounting for 6.9 percent while Singapore followed in the fourth place with a share of 6.4 percent of total exports. Finally, Belgium claimed the fifth position, accounting for 5.3 percent of the total exports.
2.2 Top Five (5) Import Markets

Namibia’s appetite for foreign goods was mainly satiated by Zambia, South Africa, DRC, India and Bulgaria, as they supplied the domestic economy with the most needed import requirements (Chart 4). Overall, these countries accounted for the largest share of imports received in Namibia, accounting for 75 percent of total imports.

*Chart 4: Import market share by top five countries*

Zambia, for the first time became Namibia’s largest import market, accounting for 26.2 percent of the value of all goods received into the country during the review period. South Africa lost its usual number one position and had to settle for the second position with a contribution of 22.2 percent to the total imports from the rest of the world. DRC’ contribution to Namibia’s total imports was 10.1 percent, subsequently ranking that country the third largest source of imports into the domestic economy. The share of India and Bulgaria in the country’s total import bill stood at 9.9 percent and 6.6 percent to occupy fourth and fifth position, respectively.
SECTION 3: TRADE BY PRODUCTS

This section outlines Namibia’s trade flow based on the Standard International Trade Classification Revision 4 (SITC4). The SITC groups all commodities into headings suitable for economic analysis, here the SITC is disaggregated to a 2-digit level. The SITC is recommended by the United Nations for use in external trade data and thus promotes international comparability of trade statistics.

3.1 Top Five (5) Export Products

Non-ferrous metals appeared as the largest export product for Namibia during the month of review accounting for the largest share of 49.1 percent (mainly to China and Singapore) ahead of non-monetary gold which accounted for 15.1 percent and was mainly absorbed by South Africa (Chart 5). Fish claimed the third position with a 15 percent contribution to the total exports followed by the category of metalliferous ores and metal scrap with 10.8 percent and Live animals coming in the fifth position with a contribution of 1.7 percent.

During the month of April 2020, Namibia mainly exported fish to countries such as Spain, Zambia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates while metalliferous ores and metal scrap was mostly absorbed by China and South Africa. Finally, live animals were bound for the South African market.

Chart 5: Top five export by products (percentage share)

The top five commodities jointly accounted for 91.7 percent of total export (Chart 5).
3.2 Top Five (5) Re-export Products

Recent figures show that total re-exports were down by 30.2 percent and 55.4 percent from its levels of N$3,265 million and N$5,112 million obtained in March 2020 and April 2019 respectively.

*Chart 6: Top five re-export by products (percentage share)*

In terms of commodities, Non-ferrous metals remained the largest re-exported product for the country as it constituted the largest share of 90.2 percent of total re-exports (mainly to China, Belgium and Germany) as reflected in Chart 6. Re-exports of petroleum and petroleum products which occupy the second position at 1.6 percent share, were mostly destined to Namibia’s two landlocked neighbors of Botswana and Zambia. Zambia followed by Italy and Luxemburg were the main recipient of iron and steel that was re-exported by Namibia during the period under review. The contributions made by other categories were less than 2 percent.
3.3 Top Five (5) Import Products

In April 2020, total imports into Namibia were down to N$5,980 million from N$7 305 million recorded in March 2020. The top five import commodities into Namibia jointly accounted for 68.5 percent of total import with the Non-ferrous metal accounting for the largest share of 36.1 percent. Petroleum and petroleum products category followed in the second place with a share of 19 percent. Metalliferous ores and metal scrap ranked third with 7 percent of the total import, followed by Cereals and Fertilizers with a share of 3.2 percent (Chart 7) respectively.

*Chart 7: Top five import by products (percentage share)*

Non-ferrous metals were mostly imported from Zambia and DRC while petroleum and petroleum products were sourced from India, Malaysia and Estonia. Metalliferous ores and metal scrap were sourced from Bulgaria, Eswatini and South Africa while Namibia’s demand for cereals was satiated by South Africa, USA and Germany. Finally, South Africa was also responsible for most of the fertilizers imported into Namibia.
SECTION 4: TRADE BY ECONOMIC REGIONS

4.1 Exports by Economic Regions
Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) remained the largest export destination for Namibia’s goods (mostly non-ferrous metals) during the month of review, with a market share of 42.8 percent of the total export. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and European Union (EU) followed in the second and third positions, accounting for a market share of 21.8 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively (Chart 8). Exports to SACU comprised mainly of non-monetary gold while non-ferrous metals and fish were responsible for the large exports to the EU. SADC-excluding-SACU followed in fourth place with a share of 6.9 percent due to high exports of fish. Finally, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) came in fifth position with a market share of 6.3 percent. Fish was the largest export commodity to the COMESA region.

*Chart 8: Top five export by Economic Regions (percentage share)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Region</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRIC</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACU</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC excl SACU</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Chart 8: Top five export by Economic Regions (percentage share)](chart8.png)
4.2 Imports by Economic Regions

In April 2020, COMESA emerged as the largest source of imports for Namibia with 37.4 percent of all goods (mainly non-ferrous metals and sugar) received in Namibia coming from that region. The same commodities (non-ferrous metals and sugar) were responsible for a high value of imports from SADC-excluding-SACU which had a share of 36.7 percent of total imports into Namibia and hence making it the second largest source of imports into the country. The SACU region accounted for 23.1 percent of Namibia’s total import bill, dropping to the third position, followed by the EU and BRIC in the fourth and fifth position with 13.6 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively (Chart 9).

*Chart 9: Top five import by economic regions (percentage share)*

Imports from SACU comprised mainly commodities such as essential oils and resinoids and perfume materials; cereals and cereal preparations; and vegetables and fruits, while metalliferous ores and metal scrap; petroleum and petroleum products; and vehicles were responsible for a high share of imports from the EU. Petroleum and petroleum products were the main commodity imported from BRIC during the period under review.
SECTION 5: TRADE BY MODE OF TRANSPORT

5.1 Export by mode of transport
During the month of April 2020, exports amounting to N$2,926 million, representing 56.8 percent of total exports left the country by sea reflecting a significant drop when compared to the value of goods exported in March 2020 (N$5,362 million) and April 2019 (N$6,632 million). The drop is attributed to COVID-19 measures that were put in place. In addition, road and air transportation accounted for 28 percent and 15.2 percent of total exports, respectively (Chart 10).

Chart 10: Export by mode of transport (percentage share)

In terms of tonnage, for the month of April 2020 about 59,682 tons of goods left Namibia by road down from 96,714 tons recorded in March 2020 and further down from 98,487 tons registered in April 2019. About 57,598 tons of goods left the country by sea compared to 134,267 tons registered in March 2020 and from 130,287 tons recorded in April 2019. Only 4 tons left the country by air after 149 tons was registered in March 2020.
5.2 Import by mode of transport

For the month of April 2020, goods that entered Namibia via road was valued at N$3,604 million representing 60.3 percent of all goods imported in the country. While 38.8 percent of the goods reached the country by sea and the remaining 0.9 percent came in by air (Chart 11). The significant decline in imports coming into the country by air was due to COVID-19 lock down measures which saw many airliners being grounded including cargo airliners. Finally, the use of charter planes to fly in the most needed COVID-19 related medical supplies is too costly hence contributing to the decline in imports by air.

*CHART 11: Import by mode of transport (percentage share)*

In terms of tonnage, about 221,257 tons of all goods that reached Namibia came in by sea while 111,853 tons reached the country by road. A further 304 tons of goods were transported on rail while air only accounted for 21 tons of imports into the country.
6.0 Impact of COVID-19

The country’s lock down following the COVID-19 pandemic saw a decline in both exports and imports which in turn had a negative effect on overall merchandise trade. As stated earlier in the report, exports were down by 43 percent, this is a significant slowdown after an increase of 71.9 percent was recorded in March 2020. Furthermore, the recent decline in exports is the largest since April 2019 (Chart 12). Similarly, imports were also down by 18.1 percent after recording declines of 16.7 percent and 15.2 percent in March 2020 and in April 2019, respectively.

The largest contributors to the recent (Apr-20) decline in exports since March 2020 were Non-metallic mineral manufactures which fell by 99.4 percent, other transport equipment 93.6 percent, metalliferous ores and metal scrap 79.9 percent and Fish 18.9 percent.

*CHART 12: %Δ in exports and imports*
On the other hand, most of the slowdown in imports came from a range of products with the most noticeable decline recorded by Medicinal and pharmaceutical products at 47.4 percent, Cereals (31.7 percent), essential oils and resinoids and perfume materials (14.8 percent) and, Fruits and vegetables (9.5 percent). The decline experienced in Medicinal and pharmaceutical products follows an export ban imposed by South Africa on commodities of that category. The ban put tremendous pressure on the country’s import of this category as 65.5 percent of imports of this category came from South Africa before the ban implementation.

During the period of review, importation of certain commodities became of interest to the agency as government responded to the pandemic. Among these commodities, are food items such as sunflower oil, rice, sugar as well as maize grains and wheat as these are common in most of the donated food relief parcels/baskets. Maize showed a relatively stable trend since December 2019 despite the sharp increase from its level of N$79 million in December 2019 to N$94 million in January 2020, and then it remained close to N$80 million from February 2020 through to April 2020. The country’s import of wheat has been on an upward trend from N$33 million during January 2020 to N$91 million in March 2020 before falling to N$41 million in April 2020. While, import of rice have been declining from N$24 million in December 2019 to N$10 million recorded in February 2020 before rising to N$25 million during March 2020 and then falling to N$12 million in the reporting month. Sugar imports increased from N$69 million in December 2019 to N$75 million in February 2020 before it fell to N$70 million in March 2020 and rose again to N$76 Million in April 2020. Looking at the importation of sunflower oil it was observed that for the two consecutive months, imports declined in January and February 2020 and increased as from March and April 2020 to register N$39 million in the reporting month from N$37 million in January 2020.
Other than food commodities, the Agency also looked at some of the Covid-19 related products such as disinfectants, Toilet papers and breathing appliances including gas masks. Both import of disinfectants and breathing appliances have been increasing since December 2019 through April 2020. The import value of disinfectant rose from N$600 thousands in December 2019 to N$8 million in the reporting period. Whereas the import value of breathing appliances including gas masks increased from N$706 thousands in December 2019 to N$6 million in April 2020. The trend of imports of all selected commodities since December 2019 to April 2020 are shown in Chart 13.
Conclusion

In April 2020 Namibia’s exports stood at N$5,154 million and imports at N$5,980 million, subsequently the country’s trade balance resulted in a deficit of N$826 million.

Current figures show that exports weakened, dropping by 43 percent from its level of N$9,036 million in March 2020. When compared to its level of N$9,875 million recorded in April 2019, exports declined by 47.8 percent. Similarly, imports dropped by 18.1 percent from its level of N$7,305 million in the preceding month while a decline of 36.7 percent was observed when compared to its level of N$9,451 million recorded in April 2019.

China emerged as Namibia’s largest export destination, accounting for 42.8 percent of all goods exported, followed by South Africa with a market share of 20.8 percent of total exports. The demand side saw Zambia emerging as the main source of imports for Namibia, accounting for 26.2 percent of total imports. South Africa lost its position and had to settle in the second position with a share of 22.2 percent in Namibia’s total imports.

The analysis of commodities revealed that the category of Non-ferrous metals was Namibia’s largest commodity exported with a share of 49.1 percent of total exports followed by Non-monetary gold (15.1 percent), Fish (15 percent), metalliferous ores and metal scrap (10.8 percent) and Live animals (1.7 percent). In terms of imports, Non-ferrous metals also appeared as the most imported commodity with a relative share of 36.1 percent of total imports, followed by Petroleum and petroleum products (19 percent), Metalliferous ores and scrap metals (7 percent). Cereals and Fertilizers each had a share of 3.2 percent in Namibia’s total imports.

In terms of regional composition, BRIC maintained its lead as the largest export market during the month of April 2020, with a market share of 42.8 percent of total exports followed by the SACU region with relative market shares of 21.8 percent. On the imports side COMESA emerged as the main source of Namibia’s imports having a share of 37.4 percent in the country’s total import bill followed by SADC-excluding-SACU with a share of 36.7 percent.

The composition of trade by mode of transport shows that in April 2020, the majority of goods exported left the country by sea, accounting for 56.8 percent of total exports. Whereas most goods that entered Namibia came in by road, accounting for 60.3 percent of total imports.
The impact of COVID-19 was different in April 2020 whereby both exports and imports plunged as domestic and foreign borders continued implementing lockdown measures in an effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. This effect was severe for Namibia as a net importer of most products including Medicinal and pharmaceutical products and, basic food stuffs.