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
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 employment, production, income, consumption 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 various publications. This publication outlines the monthly developments of Namibia’s trade in merchandise with the rest of the world during the period of September 2020.

The month of September 2020 saw Namibia’s total merchandise trade reaching to the level of N$18.1 billion, which is 10.8 percent and 14.5 percent higher than N$16.4 billion recorded in August 2020 and N$15.8 billion recorded in September 2019. However, the country’s trade balance remained at a deficit of N$1.4 billion as in August 2020, but improved from a deficit of N$1.9 billion recorded in September 2019.

Namibia’s trade composition by partner was skewed towards a few countries. China emerged as Namibia’s largest export market while South Africa maintained its position as the number one source of imports for Namibia. The composition of goods exported remained the same mainly comprising of minerals such as non-ferrous metals, metalliferous ores and metal scrap, non-metallic mineral manufactures, as well as non-monetary gold. Fish remained the only non-mineral products among the top five list of exports. On the other hand, the import basket comprised mainly of non-ferrous metals, petroleum and petroleum products; metalliferous ores and metal scrap, vehicles and inorganic chemicals.

The September 2020 trade figures indicates that total re-exports decreased by 7.7 percent month-on-month and increased by 61.8 percent year-on-year to register N$4.0 billion from N$4.4 billion recorded in August 2020 and N$2.5 billion in September 2019. The non-ferrous metals took the largest share of re-exports, constituting a share of 61.1 percent of total re-exports mainly to China and Hong Kong. The non-ferrous metals which were re-exported were mostly sourced from Zambia and DRC.

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 trade statistics. In the same vain I would like to urge our users of statistical information to send to us any comments that may enhance the improvement of this report.

ALEX SHIMUAFENI
STATISTICIAN GENERAL & CEO
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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 September 2020, the value of exports improved, rising by 12.1 percent to N$8.4 billion from its revised level of N$7.5 billion recorded in August 2020. While, when compared to its level of N$7.0 billion obtained in September 2019, exports improved by 20.0 percent. Imports on the other hand surged by 10.2 percent and 9.6 percent when compared to September 2019 and August 2020, respectively, resulting in Namibia’s total merchandise trade with the ROW to improve by 10.8 percent and 14.5 percent when compared to August 2020 and September 2019 respectively (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Total exports and imports September 2019 to September 2020

1 Exports represents total exports derived from the sum of domestic exports and re-exports.
2 Rest of the world (ROW).
1.2 Trade Balance

The trade balance compares the country’s trade with the ROW in terms of earnings (exports) and expenditure (imports). In September 2020, Namibia trade deficit remained at N$1.4 billion as in August 2020 but improved from a deficit of N$1.9 billion in September 2019 (Chart 2).

*Chart 2: Trade balance, September 2019 to September 2020*
SECTION 2: DIRECTION OF TRADE (DOT)

2.1 Top Five (5) Export Markets

In September 2020, Namibia major trading partner in terms of exports did not show much change, maintaining the same countries (such as China, South Africa, Zambia and Botswana) as in August 2020, with an addition of Belgium which replaced Spain on the list. These top five markets absorbed 76.6 percent of total Namibian exports to the ROW (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Export market share by top five countries

China maintained its position as the largest export market, absorbing 44.5 percent of all goods exported, ahead of South Africa in the second place which absorbed 16.3 percent of total exports. Belgium claimed the third position to account for 6.2 percent while Zambia and Botswana shared the fourth place with a share of 4.8 percent of total exports a piece.
2.2 Top Five (5) Import Markets

South Africa, Zambia, DRC, Bulgaria and China were the main suppliers of the most needed import requirements for Namibia. These countries all together accounted for a combined share of 75.5 percent of total imports (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Import market share by top five countries

South Africa topped Namibia’s import market with a share of 35.1 percent of the value of all goods received into the country during September 2020. Zambia followed in the second position with a contribution of 24.1 percent to total imports. In third place is DRC accounting for 6.4 percent of Namibia’s total import whereas Bulgaria and China rounded off the top five list with contributions of 5.3 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively.
SECTION 3: TRADE BY PRODUCTS

Section 3 of this report outlines Namibia’s trade flow based on the Standard International Trade Classification Revision 4 (SITC rev 4). The SITC groups all commodities into headings suitable for economic analysis, in this section, the SITC is disaggregated to 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 mainly destined to China and Hong Kong was Namibia’s largest export product during the month of review accounting for 30.1 percent of total exports ahead of Metalliferous ores and metal scrap which stood at 22.2 percent and was mainly absorbed by China and Belgium. Non-metallic mineral manufactures primarily destined to Botswana, Belgium and United Arab Emirates claimed the third position with 12.0 percent contribution to total exports followed by fish in fourth place with 10.1 percent, mainly exported to Spain, South Africa and Zambia. Finally, Non-monetary gold came in the fifth position with a contribution of 9.2 percent as South Africa continued to be Namibia’s only export market for gold. The top five commodities jointly accounted for 83.7 percent of total export (Chart 5).

Chart 5: Top five export by products (percentage share)
3.2 Top Five (5) Re-export Products

Re-exports are goods imported by residents who assume short-term ownership of the goods. The goods are subsequently exported without having received any significant industrial transformation. Activities in the intermediate country that may benefit from re-exports include but not limited to the following: sorting, re-packaging, storage, transport and trade mediation services. This implies that the country’s services sector greatly benefits from activities of re-exports. Additionally, re-exports serve as an indication of favorable cooperate tax in the intermediate country.

The September 2020 figures show that total re-exports declined by 7.7 percent month-on-month and increased by 61.8 percent year-on-year to register N$4.0 billion.

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

The top five commodities demanding the most domestic logistical services are illustrated in Chart 6, with non-ferrous metals being the largest product re-exported, constituting a share of 61.1 percent of total re-exports mainly to China and Hong Kong followed by non-metallic mineral manufactures with a share of 14.6 percent of total re-exports which were mostly destined to Belgium, United Arab Emirates and Israel. Re-exports of Inorganic chemicals accounted for 2.8 percent of all commodities re-exported and was mostly destined to Finland. The other categories of vehicles and machinery accounted for 2.5 percent each.

Non-ferrous metals were mostly sourced from Zambia and DRC while most of non-metallic mineral manufactures re-exported by Namibia came from Various Countries and South Africa. Inorganic chemicals were primarily imported from DRC. South Africa supplied most of re-exported vehicles and machinery.

3.3 Top Five (5) Import Products

In September 2020, the value of total imports into Namibia stood at N$9.8 billion from N$8.9 billion recorded in August 2020. The top five commodities that were imported into Namibia jointly accounted for 50.5 percent of total import with non-ferrous metals accounting for the largest share of 27.5 percent. Petroleum and petroleum products followed in the second place with a share of 9.2 percent. Metalliferous ores and metal scrap ranked third with 5.9 percent of the total import while vehicles and inorganic chemicals followed with contributions of 4.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively (Chart 7).

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

Non-ferrous metals were mostly imported from Zambia and DRC while most of petroleum and petroleum products imported into Namibia came from Oman, India, Netherlands and South Africa. Domestic demand for metalliferous ores and metal scrap were mainly met by Bulgaria. South Africa supplied the most needed vehicles. Finally, DRC satiated Namibia’s demand for inorganic chemicals.

5 From its mining operations across Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Canada, De Beers export rough diamonds to Botswana for aggregation. Mining Weekly Online describes “aggregation as the process of mixing like-for-like rough diamonds from De Beers mines in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Canada”. Once the aggregation process is complete, the mixed rough diamonds are imported back into Namibia for cutting and polishing. Since these diamonds from either of the countries are mixed, Customs record country of origin as “various countries”.

5
SECTION 4: TRADE BY ECONOMIC REGIONS

4.1 Exports by Economic Regions

Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC)) became the largest export destination for Namibia’s goods (mostly copper & Uranium) during the month under review, with a market share of 45.3 percent of the total exports. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the European Union (EU) followed in the second and third positions, accounting for a market share of 21.1 percent and 14.6 percent, respectively (Chart 8). Exports to SACU comprised mainly of diamonds, live animals, while fish, diamonds and copper were responsible for the large value of exports to the EU. SADC-excluding-SACU followed in fourth place with a share of 8.3 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 7.2 percent. Fish was again the largest export commodity to the COMESA region.

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

The percentages for economic regions are based on the world aggregates because of overlapping member states for some regions hence the percentages do not add up to 100%.
4.2 Imports by Economic Regions

In September 2020, the SACU region emerged as the largest source of imports for Namibia accounting for 35.7 percent of all goods imported (mainly vehicles as well as essential oils and sugars and sugar preparations). Non-ferrous metals were responsible for the high value of imports from COMESA which had a share of 30.8 percent of total imports and hence making it the second largest source of imports into the country. Equally, SADC excluding SACU region accounted for 30.5 percent of Namibia's total import bill, followed by the EU and BRIC in the fourth and fifth positions with 12.3 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively (Chart 9).

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

Imports from SADC excluding SACU comprised mainly of Non-ferrous metals and inorganic chemicals; while metalliferous ores and metal scrap was responsible for the high import value from the EU. Furthermore, petroleum and petroleum products accounted for the highest value 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 September 2020, exports amounting to N$5.3 billion, representing 63.9 percent of total exports left the country by sea. This translated into an increase of 16.1 percent when compared to the value N$4.6 billion of goods exported in August 2020. Similarly, an increase of 51.3 percent was noted when compared to September 2019 level of N$3.5 billion. Air and road transportation accounted for 21.2 percent and 14.9 percent of total exports, respectively (Chart 10).

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

In terms of tonnage, for the month of September 2020 about 119,669 tons of goods left Namibia by sea, up from 85,254 tons recorded in August 2020 and down from 162,445 tons registered in September 2019. About 107,431 tons of goods left the country by road compared to 110,254 tons registered in the preceding month and from 117,897 tons recorded in the same month last year. Whereas 115 tons left the country by air after registering only 73 tons in August 2020 and 326 tons in September 2019.
5.2 Import by mode of transport

For the month of September 2020, goods that entered Namibia via road were valued at N$6.8 billion representing 70.1 percent of all goods imported in the country. While 26.8 percent of the goods reached the country via sea and the remaining 3.0 percent arrived by air (Chart 11).

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

In terms of tonnage, about 187,400 tons of goods that reached Namibia came in by road while 127,688 tons reached the country by sea. A further, 2005 and 107 tons of goods were imported into the country via air and rail, respectively.
6. Impact of COVID-19

This section focuses on selected commodities mostly contained in food parcels distributed by the Government to the public in the wake of COVID-19. Since the country's lock down measures, the supply of certain basic commodities was disrupted and hence became of interest to the Agency to monitor as government responded to the pandemic. Among these commodities, are food items such as cooking oil, rice, sugar as well as maize grains and wheat. Non-food items constitutes of disinfectants, toilet paper and breathing appliances. The trend of imports for the commodities outlined above since Jan-2020 to September-2020 are illustrated in Chart 12.

Analysis of Chart 12 shows a fluctuating trend in imports of selected commodities used to evaluate the impact of Covid-19. But in September 2020, imports of these commodities declined. For instance, import of wheat registered the largest decline of 86.6 percent from its August 2020 level of N$48 million to a mere N$6 million in September 2020. Similarly, on a monthly basis import of cooking oil and rice declined by 11.4 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively. On the other hand, imports of maize and sugar increased, with maize rising by 19.6 percent while sugar surged by 17.5 percent.

The import trend for non-food items such as breathing appliances, disinfectants and toilet paper are also reflected in Chart 12, with disinfectants recording a decline on monthly basis of 37.3 percent while import of breathing appliances and toilet paper increased month on month by 221.1 percent and 46.8 percent, respectively.
7. Commodity of the Month

The commodity for analysis in September 2020 was the category of vegetables. In June 2020 the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) announced strict regulations to curb the importation of fresh fruits and vegetables, with effect from 1 August 2020. The new measures involve import levies, subjecting all aspiring and existing importers to register with the board and acquire import permits. According to the NAB, this is done in line with the Market Share Promotion (MSP) scheme, aimed at stimulating local production and trade of horticultural products in Namibia. The regulation is implemented to promote the growth at home strategy implemented by the Ministry of Industrialization and SME Development (MISMED).

Prior to the implementation of the import restrictions, the import value for vegetables stood at N$26.7 million in July 2020 and subsequently rose to N$29.2 million in August 2020 before it declined to N$27.1 million during the current period. Overall, the country imported N$452.1 million worth of vegetables since September 2019 (Chart 13). The highest figures of N$49.1 million was recorded in April 2020 while the lowest figure of N$23.1 million was registered in June 2020.

The import value of these products amounting to N$27.1 million in September 2020 constitutes 57.8 percent of potatoes, 6.1 percent of garlic, 5.7 percent of other fresh or chilled vegetables and the rest of the products contributed less than five percent of edible vegetables, roots and tubers. These products were solely sourced from South Africa.
Conclusion

In September 2020, Namibia’s exports stood at N$8.4 billion and imports at N$9.8 billion, subsequently the country’s trade balance resulted in a deficit of N$1.4 billion.

The September figures show that exports strengthened month-on-month, rising by 12.1 percent from its revised level of N$7.5 billion in August 2020 whereas year-on-year export improved by 20.0 percent from N$7.0 billion recorded in September 2019. Similarly, total imports increased by 9.6 percent and 10.2 percent from its approximate level of N$8.9 billion in the preceding month and September 2019, respectively.

China maintained its dominance as the country’s largest export destination, with a share of 44.5 percent of all goods exported, and was followed by South Africa which accounted for 16.3 percent of total exports. Furthermore, Belgium, Zambia and Botswana formed part of Namibia’s top five export destinations. The demand side saw South Africa maintaining its first spot as the country’s largest source of imports, accounting for 35.1 percent of total imports into Namibia. Zambia was also firm on its usual second position with 24.1 percent of the market share. DRC, Bulgaria and China also formed part of Namibia’s top five sources of imports.

The analysis of commodities revealed that the category of non-ferrous metals had the largest share (30.1%) in Namibia’s total exports ahead of metalliferous ores and metal scrap (22.2%), non-metallic mineral manufactures (12.0%), fish (10.1 %) and non-monetary gold (9.2%). In terms of imports, non-ferrous metals also appeared as the most imported commodity with a relative share of 27.5 percent of total imports, followed by petroleum & petroleum products with 9.2 percent, metalliferous ores and metal scrap with 5.9 percent. Moreover, vehicles and inorganic chemicals contributed 4.3 percent and 3.5 percent in Namibia’s total imports respectively.

In terms of regional composition, BRIC was the largest export market during the month of September 2020, with a market share of 45.3 percent of total exports followed by the SACU region with relative market shares of 21.1 percent. On the imports side SACU remained the main source of Namibia’s imports having a share of 35.7 percent in the country’s total import bill followed by COMESA and SADC excluding SACU with 30.8 percent and 30.5 percent, respectively.

Namibia’s trade by mode of transport show that in September 2020, the majority of goods exported left the country by sea, accounting for 63.9 percent of total exports. Followed by Air transport with 21.2 percent and Road transport with 14.9 percent. In terms imports, most goods that entered Namibia came in by road, accounting for 70.1 percent of total imports followed by sea (26.8%) and air (3%). An analysis on the import of COVID-19 related products indicates that sugar, cooking oil, maize and toilet papers topped the list of such product and disinfectants was the least imported product for the month of September 2020.
Finally, the category of edible vegetables, roots and tubers was selected as the commodity of the month in September 2020 and the figures shows that import of these products stood at N$27 million mainly distributed among commodities such as potatoes, Seed potatoes and garlic which were solely sourced from South Africa.