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 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 May 2020.

The month of May 2020 saw Namibia’s total merchandise trade totaling N$15.0 billion, 21.8 percent higher than N$12.4 billion recorded last month but lower by 15.8 percent when compared to its level of N$17.9 billion recorded in the same month of 2019. The country recorded an improved trade deficit of N$1 billion in May 2020 compared to its level of N$1.4 billion in May 2019.

Namibia’s trade composition by partner was skewed towards a few common countries. China emerged as Namibia’s largest export market while South Africa reclaimed its 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-metallic mineral manufactures, non-monetary gold, metalliferous ores and metal scrap. Fish remained 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, metalliferous ores and metal scrap; petroleum and petroleum products; vehicles as well as pharmaceutical products.

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 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
1.1 Total Exports and Total Imports

In May 2020, the value of exports\(^1\) improved, rising by 24.5 percent to N$7.0 billion from its revised level of N$5.6 billion recorded in April 2020. By contrast, when compared to its level of N$8.3 billion obtained in May 2019, exports dropped by 15.1 percent. The current value of imports followed a similar trend, rising by 19.6 percent and subsequently falling by 16.4 percent when compared to April 2020 and May 2019 respectively. The simultaneous increase in both exports and imports month-on-month boost total merchandise trade by 21.8 percent compared to April 2020 whereas the simultaneous declines in both export and import year-on-year depressed overall trade by 15.8 percent when compared to May 2019 (Chart 1).

\(^1\) Exports represents total exports derived from the sum of domestic exports and re-exports

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

The trade balance compares the country’s trade in terms of earnings (exports) and expenditure (imports) with the rest of the world. In May 2020, Namibia registered a trade deficit of N$1.0 billion after it posted a revised deficit of N$1.1 billion in April 2020. Namibia’s trade deficit persisted since May 2019 to May 2020, with exception of March 2020 (Chart 2).

*Chart 2: Trade balance, May 2019 to May 2020*

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The value of imports here is denoted as negative to show an outflow.
2.1 Top Five (5) Export Markets

In May 2020, Namibia’s export market comprised mainly of countries such as China, Botswana, South Africa, Hong Kong and Spain accounted for 77.1 percent of Namibian exports to the rest of the world (Chart 3). This group of countries appears to be the regular top five export destination for Namibia over the past twelve months except for Hong Kong.

Recent figures show that China was the largest export market for domestic goods, absorbing 37.3 percent of all goods exported, ahead of Botswana in the second place which absorbed 15.4 percent of total exports. South Africa claimed the third position, accounting for 14.4 percent while Hong Kong followed in the fourth place with a share of 5.4 percent of total exports. Finally, Spain occupied the fifth position with a contribution of 4.5 percent to domestic exports.
2.2 Top Five (5) Import Markets

Namibia's appetite for foreign goods was mainly satiated by Zambia, South Africa, Turkey, China 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 77.1 percent of total imports.

Chart 4: Import market share by top five countries

South Africa claimed its usual position as Namibia's largest import market, accounting for 32.3 percent of the value of all goods received into the country during the period of review. Zambia followed in the second position with a contribution of 21.1 percent to total imports from the rest of the world. Turkey's contribution to Namibia's total imports was 10.7 percent, subsequently ranking that country the third largest source of imports into the domestic economy. China and Bulgaria round off the top five list with respective contributions of 6.8 percent and 6.2 percent.
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 R4). The SITC groups all commodities into headings suitable for economic analysis, here 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 appeared as the largest export product for Namibia during the month of review accounting for the largest share of 34.7 percent (mainly to China and Hong Kong) ahead of Non-metallic mineral manufactures which accounted for 17.8 percent and was mainly absorbed by Botswana (Chart 5). Metalliferous ores and metal scrap primarily destined to China claimed the third position with a 17.2 percent contribution to total exports followed by fish with 10.2 percent as Spain continued to be Namibia’s top export market for fish. Finally, non-monetary gold came in the fifth position with a contribution of 8.2 percent and South Africa remains the largest market for Namibia’s gold. The top five commodities jointly accounted for 88.1 percent of total export (Chart 5).

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

Recent figures show that total re-exports were up by 11.7 percent from its levels of N$2.6 billion obtained in April 2020 and 10.1 percent lower than N$3.2 billion witnessed in May 2019.

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

In terms of commodities, Non-ferrous metals remained the largest re-export product for the country as it constituted the largest share of 77.7 percent of total re-exports (mainly to China, Hong Kong and Belgium) (Chart 6). This was followed by non-metallic mineral manufactures with 6.7 percent which were mostly destined to United Arab Emirates and South Africa. The contributions made by other categories were less than 5 percent (Chart 6).
3.3 Top Five (5) Import Products

In May 2020, total imports into Namibia reached N$8.0 billion from N$6.7 billion recorded in April 2020. The top five import commodities into Namibia jointly accounted for 57 percent of total import with non-ferrous metals accounting for the largest share of 25.8 percent. The category of metalliferous ores and metal scrap followed in the second place with a share of 17 percent. Petroleum and petroleum products ranked third with 6.7 percent of the total import and finally vehicles and pharmaceuticals followed with respective contributions of 4.8 percent and 2.7 respectively (Chart 7).

Non-ferrous metals were mostly imported from Zambia and DRC while metalliferous ores and metal scrap were sourced from Turkey, Bulgaria and South Africa. Petroleum and petroleum products were sourced from Togo, China, Italy and South Africa while Namibia's vehicles were satiated by South Africa, Sweden and the UK. Finally, South Africa and India were responsible for most of the pharmaceuticals 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 and; metalliferous ores and metal scrap) during the month of review, with a market share of 37.3 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 29.8 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively (Chart 8). Exports to SACU comprised mainly non-metallic mineral manufactures and non-monetary gold while commodities such as non-ferrous metal, fish and cork and wood were responsible for the large amount of exports to the EU. SADC-excluding-SACU followed in fourth place with a share of 7.7 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 6.4 percent. Fish was also the largest export commodity to the COMESA region.

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

In May 2020, SACU emerged as the largest source of imports with 32.9 percent of all goods (mainly vehicles and; essential oils and resinoids) received in Namibia originating from that region. Non-ferrous metals and inorganic chemicals were responsible for the high value of imports from COMESA which had a share of 27.7 percent in Namibia’s total imports and hence making it the second largest source of imports into the country. The SADC excl. SACU region was ranked the third largest import market with a share of 27.4 percent of Namibia’s total import bill, ahead of the EU 11.7 percent, EFTA 10.9 percent and BRIC 9.3 percent (Chart 9).

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

Imports from SADC excl. SACU comprised mainly of non-ferrous metals whereas metalliferous ores and scrap metals and; petroleum and petroleum products were responsible for high imports from the EU and EFTA. Petroleum and petroleum products and; cereals were the main commodities 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 May 2020, exports via sea amounted to N$3.7 billion, representing 52.9 percent of all goods leaving the country, this is a significant increase from its level of N$3.1 billion exported in April 2020, but declined when compared to N$4.6 billion registered in May 2019. The recovery in exports was attributed to relaxation of the COVID-19 lock down that saw some businesses resuming their operations. Air and road transportations accounted for 25.9 percent and 21.1 percent of total exports respectively (Chart 10).

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

In terms of tonnage, for the month of May 2020, about 93,219 tons of goods left Namibia by sea, up from 79,542 tons recorded in April 2020 and further up from 86,020 tons registered in May 2019. About 71,804 tons of goods left the country by road compared to 67,707 tons registered in April 2020 and from 110,776 tons recorded in May 2019. At least 297 tons left the country by air after registering only 4 tons in April 2020.
5.2 Import by mode of transport

During the period of review, goods that entered Namibia via road were valued at N$5.4 billion representing 66.7 percent of all goods imported into the country, while 32.4 percent of the goods reached the country by sea and the remaining 0.8 percent came in by air (Chart 11).

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

In terms of tonnage, about 177,230 tons of all goods that reached Namibia came in by sea while 143,415 tons reached the country by road. A further 358 tons of goods were transported on multimodal transport, while rail and air only accounted for 95 and 28 tons of imports into the country, respectively.
6. Impact of COVID-19

As the country entered stage three of the COVID-19 lock down regulations, many businesses opened for operations after nearly three months of closure. The re-opening of businesses meant resumption of most of the economic activities including the external sector which subsequently saw an improvement in both exports and imports. As stated earlier in the report, exports were up by 24.5 percent, this is a significant improvement after a revised decline of 37.7 percent was observed in April 2020.

Since the country entered into lock down following the COVID-19 pandemic, the supply 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. The import of maize was high (N$94 million) in January 2020, it fell to N$77 million in February 2020 and became stable until it plunged to N$48 million in May 2020.

The country’s import of wheat showed an upward trajectory starting with N$33 million in January 2020 and rising to N$48 million and N$91 million in February and March respectively before plunging to N$41 million in April and again rising to N$90 million in May 2020. Import of cooking oil have been fairly stable over the past five months with February and May recording N$34 million below average (N$36 million). Import of sugar was stable in the first three months of 2020 before it jumped to N$113 million in April and subsequently plummeting to N$23 million in May. Finally, imports of sugar had a mixed trend in the past five months but declined sharply in May 2020 with only N$23 million compared to N$113 million recorded in April 2020 (Chart 12).

**Chart 12: Import of selected commodities**
Other than food commodities, the attention was also drawn to some of the Covid-19 related products such as disinfectants, Toilet papers and breathing appliances. Imports of disinfectants has been low between January and March but improved to N$8 million in April before taking a dive (N$4 million) in May 2020. The import of toilet paper was stable over the past five months with an average of N$10 million but declined to N$6 million, below average in May 2020. Finally, imports of breathing appliances were low (N$1 million) in January but increased steadily through February to April before plummeting to N$4 million in May 2020.
7. Commodity of the Month

This section provides an in-depth analysis on the performance of exports of live animal\(^3\) with emphasis on value and market composition during the period May 2019 to May 2020.

**CHART 13. Exports of live animals**

Despite being previously ranked among the major foreign exchange earner prior to a severe drought experienced in the country during 2019, live animals only contributed 1 percent to total export earnings in May 2020. For the period under review (May 2019- May 2020), the country recorded consecutive declines in export of live animals during the first nine (8) months of the period. During this period, exports of live animal reached the lowest level of N$72 million in May 2020 from its highest level of N$278 million in May 2019. In February 2020, Namibia recorded the highest increase of N$76 million (103.8%) in export of live animals above the lowest level of N$73 million in January 2020. After February 2020, export of live animals declined through to May 2020 (chart 13).

The consecutive declines observed in 2019 is attributed to persistent drought that negatively impacted the country’s agricultural sector over the period.

South Africa remained the main export destination of the country’s live animals contributing N$71 million (98.2%) of the total receipts earned from export of live animals. Angola and Zimbabwe contributed the remaining 1.8 percent share to Namibia’s total earnings from live animals.

\(^3\) Live animals is a category consisting of all live animals including game but excluding fish. The N$71 million recorded in May 2020 constitute: Cattle- N$39 million; Sheep- N$30 million and Goats- N$2 million.
Conclusion

In May 2020, Namibia's exports stood at N$7.0 billion and imports at N$8.0 billion, subsequently the country's trade balance resulted in a deficit of N$1.0 billion.

Recent figures show that exports improved, rising by 24.5 percent from its revised level of N$5.6 billion in April 2020. When compared to its level of N$8.3 billion recorded in May 2019, exports declined by 15.1 percent. Similarly, total imports grew by 19.6 percent from its level of N$6.7 billion in the preceding month while a decline of 16.4 percent was observed when compared to its level of N$9.6 billion recorded in May 2019.

China emerged as Namibia's largest export destination, accounting for 37.3 percent of all goods exported, followed by Botswana with a market share of 15.4 percent of total exports. The demand side saw South Africa reclaiming the first spot as the largest source of imports for Namibia, accounting for 32.3 percent of total imports into Namibia. Zambia occupied the second position with a share of 21.1 percent in Namibia's total imports.

The analysis of commodities revealed that the category of non-ferrous metals was Namibia's largest export with a share of 34.7 percent of total exports followed by non-metallic mineral manufactures (17.8 percent), metalliferous ores and metal scrap (17.2 percent), Fish (10.2 percent) and non-monetary gold (8.2 percent). In terms of imports, non-ferrous metals also appeared as the most imported commodity with a relative share of 25.8 percent of total imports, followed by metalliferous ores and metal scrap (17 percent), Petroleum and petroleum products (6.7 percent). Vehicles contributed 4.8 percent whereas medicinal and pharmaceutical product had a share of 2.7 percent in Namibia's total imports.

In terms of regional composition, BRIC maintained its lead as the largest export market during the month of May 2020, with a market share of 37.3 percent of total exports followed by the SACU region with relative market shares of 29.8 percent. On the imports side SACU emerged as the main source of Namibia's imports having a share of 32.9 percent in the country's total import bill followed by COMESA with a share of 27.7 percent.

The composition of trade by mode of transport shows that in May 2020, the majority of goods exported left the country by sea, accounting for 52.9 percent of total exports. Whereas most goods that entered Namibia came in by road, accounting for 66.7 percent of total imports.

As the country entered stage three of the COVID-19 lock down regulations, the impact experienced in April started to ease up with improvements observed in both exports and imports in May 2020. Furthermore, the improvement in imports is partly due to South Africa's relaxation on the export ban on pharmaceutical products imposed in March.

Finally, live animals was selected as the commodity of the month (May 2020) and the trend shows that most of the exports of live animals are destined for South African market. A declining trend was observed since May-19 due to persisted droughts experienced in the country. Although the situation improved in February and March 2020, April and May figures shows a decline in exports of live animals.