



Links between Trade, Industrialisation & Urbanisation in Africa

A Policy Brief by the Urban2063 Coalition

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Links between Trade, Industrialisation & Urbanisation in Africa
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Prologue

This policy brief was prepared by the African Centre for Cities (University of Cape Town) as part of South Africa's hosting of the Group of Twenty (G20). The G20 is organised around three core pillars - *solidarity, equality and sustainability*, and the five main objectives - *inclusive growth, employment, and less inequality; critical minerals; reform of the global financial architecture; artificial intelligence & innovation; and food security*, urbanisation, as one of the most important meta drivers of the 21st Century is absent. Thus, under the auspices of the ACC, an Urban2063 Coalition was formed to focus the G20, and especially the African Union, deliberations on the links between these pillars and objectives and the trajectory of Africa's rapidly growing cities over the next decade.

The stakes attached to Africa's urbanisation, and the prospects of the roughly 900 million people that will be living in African cities in 2035, could not be higher. As "grand living laboratories", African cities could offer new modes of planning, financing, insurance, construction and manufacturing to a global economy seeking to shift from extraction and pollution to circularity and regeneration.¹ This is critical for the African Union's *Agenda 2063* which envisages urbanisation as an "Opportunity ... [for a] positive turn around" in which "cities and other settlements [become] hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and people have access to affordable and decent housing including housing finance together with all the basic necessities of life such as, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and

ICT".² Should the goal of sustainable urbanisation fail, Africa's rapidly evolving urban spaces will default to becoming a source of ecological and social instability, a liability rather than an asset to the global economy.

In order to foster an evidence-based debate across the African continent and with its global partners, the Urban 2063 Coalition produced 8 Policy Briefs on the following topics. The first four briefs are diagnostic and the last set of four is propositional.

1. Demographic and socio-economic data that underpins the urbanisation megatrend;
2. Prevailing fiscal status of African cities and the scope for attracting finance;
3. Linkages between African urbanisation and climate change;
4. Links between trade, industrialisation and urbanisation in Africa;
5. Policy recommendation number one: encourage Multilateral Development Banks to establish a dedicated lines of credit to National Development Banks for subnational lending
6. Policy recommendation number two: anchor the G20 international trade and finance agenda in initiatives that drive structural transformation in African cities;
7. Policy recommendation three: Global financial reform requires a paradigm shift that places African cities at the core; and
8. Policy recommendation four: Improve the quality and reliability of sub-national data through a shared protocol across African Statistical Agencies.

1 Pieterse, E., (2024), Panel Discussion on Infrastructure Finance at the Africa Urban Forum, Addis Ababa, September 2024.

2 African Union (AU), (2015), *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*.

Trade, Industrialisation & Urbanisation in Africa

China's industrial progress is attributed to its capacity for forward planning, codified in five-year plans, that are then funded and implemented.³ In recent times, African leaders have called for 'African led development', 'regional cooperation and development' and domestic policies that enhance Africa's economic agency. These are laudable ideas but lack detail, political support and investment. They are not always grounded in the current reality of Africa's weak bargaining power in a

global economy that is undergoing its own contested reform. Unless they tread carefully, Africa's relatively small economies that have faced ongoing pressure to integrate into global value chains could find themselves marginalised by a global trade system reorganising around "protectionist zones" and bilateral deals.⁴ The consequence would be an acceleration of Africa's declining share of global trade (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: African exports as a percentage of world trade (1960-2022)



Source: Ken Opalo, based on IMF Direction of Trade Statistics, 2023.⁵

³ Buckley, L., & Hopkins, C., (2021), Engaging with China's Ecological Civilisation.

⁴ Pozhidaev, D (2025) 'Tariffs are a beautiful thing to behold': A Marxist analysis of protectionism and the crisis of global capitalism. International Journal of Social Renewal (April).

⁵ International Monetary Fund (2023) Direction of Trade Statistics <https://data.imf.org/en/datasets/IMF.STA:IMTS>

The traditional components of industrial policy success have undergone a profound change, due to China's growing influence, digitalisation, automation and climate change - and India's, to a lesser degree. In 2000, US trade (the dollar value of imports and exports) totalled \$2 trillion, four times more than China. By 2012, China's trade surpassed that of the US; **2024, US trade totalled \$5.3 trillion (exports \$2.07 trillion and imports \$3.27 trillion) while China's trade totalled \$6.2 trillion (exports \$3.58 trillion and imports \$2.59 trillion).**⁶ In the process of adopting a financing role to the global economy while letting China become the dominant manufacturer, the US lost five million manufacturing jobs between 1999 and 2011. One fifth of these jobs went to China in what some have called the "China Shock".⁷ Recent trade wars overlook how China, during this time, expanded the value of its exports and imports in equal proportions. The loss of manufacturing jobs, however, has affected former manufacturing hubs acutely and ushered in the discontent that birthed new waves of nationalism in the US and Europe. China has subsequently applied its newly gained industrial prowess to the energy sector. **The "new three" (solar, electric vehicle and batteries) and wind, nuclear, electricity grids and railways comprised 10% of China's GDP in 2024 (\$1.9 trillion) and accounted for 26% of China's GDP growth - a contribution that took GDP growth from 3.6% to 5.0%.**⁸

African countries do not have China's industrial capacity, in part due to Structural Adjustment Programmes that required them to trade in accordance with their "comparative advantage" - a conceptual relic of nineteenth century economic theory that links increasing trade with development for all countries.⁹ Comparative advantage, as conceived by Structural Adjustment Programmes, saw African countries export commodities and import high-value manufactured goods. This division of trade and benefits has enabled clientelism that has served a small African elite through resource extraction but has undermined the diversity of urban economies and broad-based development.¹⁰

Efforts to garner trade solidarity and enhance bargaining power through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) since 2019 and its support for Regional Economic Communities increased intra-African trade by 7.2% in 2023 to an estimated \$192 billion, despite falling absolute imports and exports between Africa and the rest of the world.¹¹ **Intra-African trade formally accounts for 12-18% of Africa's trade, but could be as high as 40% if small-scale "informal" cross border trade is accounted for.**¹²

Intra-continental trade has been undermined by the pursuit of bilateral trade deals and a dependence on raw commodity exports from Special Economic Zones; fifteen African countries relied on fossil fuel exports for 25% (or more) of their export basket in 2022 - South Sudan, Angola, Chad, Libya and Nigeria are the most vulnerable of these countries.¹³ As African Development Bank President, Akinwumi Adesina, has observed, "The fastest way to poverty is through exporting raw materials, but the highway to wealth is through global value chains ... We must add value".¹⁴ Continued focus on commodity exports, supported in some countries, has ensured that cities' primary function remains as a "landing-pad" for extractive multinational companies.¹⁵ For African countries, the commodity challenge is double-edged - (i) how to reduce dependence on the hydrocarbon and forest commodities that are linked to climate change; and (ii) how to manage the continent's strategic minerals that are crucial to clean technologies as a means of supporting economic diversification. Urbanisation, and expanding urban economies, have the potential to drive economic diversification and increase intra-Africa trade above the current level of 15% of total African trade.¹⁶

Linking urbanisation with economic diversification requires new ways of generating manufacturing competitiveness. In recent years, China has emerged as the continent's largest trading partner. **African countries imported \$173 billion worth of Chinese products in 2023 and exported \$109 billion to China, but this represents just 4.7% of China's total exports**

6 Soltani, E (2025) Global Trade Dominance: US vs China <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cp/how-china-overtook-u-s-in-global-trade-dominance-2000-2024/>

7 Autor, D. H. et al., (2016), The China Shock: Learning from Labor-Market Adjustment to Large Changes in Trade, *Annual Review of Economics*, 8, 205-240.

8 Carbon Brief, (2025), Analysis: Clean Energy Contributed a Record 10% of China's GDP in 2024.

9 Ricardo, D., (1817), *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*. Reproduced and recounted in various economic text books, notably Works of David Ricardo, Vol. 1, ed. by Piero Sraffa with the collaboration of M. H. Dobb. 1951. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10 Lopes, C., (2024), *The Self-Deception Trap: Exploring the Economic Dimensions of Charity Dependency within Africa-Europe Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan.

11 Africa Exim, (2024), *Africa Trade Report*. Mene, W., (2025), *Intra-African Trade and Its Potential to Accelerate Progress Toward the SDGs*, Brookings Institute.

12 Mangeni, F., & Mold, A., (2024), *The Economic Significance of Intra-African Trade: Getting the Narrative Right*, In *Borderless Africa: A Sceptic's Guide to the Continental Free Trade Area* (pp. 141-154), Oxford University Press.

13 Das, A., & Sharma, S., (2024), *Implications of the Energy Transition on African Economies [Working Paper]*, UNECA. Winkler, H., & Black, A., (2024), *Creating employment and reducing emissions: Options for South Africa*, *Development Southern Africa*, 1-40.

14 Adesina, A., (2023), President of the African Development Bank, interview with the Guardian, 13 October.

15 Pieterse, E., (2023), *European Cities Must Do More to Address the Legacy of Colonialism*.

16 UNCTAD, (2024), *Handbook of Statistics 2024*.

and Africa currently holds little sway over China's trade choices.¹⁷ Enhanced reciprocity with China represents an important goal for African countries, but will be most effectively established off the back of a larger domestic industrial sector; that is, African manufacturing strategies that link existing value chains with the goods and services required by Africa's rapidly expanding towns and cities. This represents a more viable strategy than efforts to emulate the Asian Tiger approach of export-oriented development, an option that has passed. Manufacturing accounts for a declining share of the global output and China controls a third of it.¹⁸ **From 2000 to 2015, the manufacturing sector's share of Africa's GDP declined 2.3 percentage points, while in the same period the level of urbanisation increased from 30% to 40%.**¹⁹ Unlike in China, Africa's recent efforts towards decentralisation have been administrative rather than fiscal, and localised industrial planning has been undermined just as it was being strengthened in China.

Frustrated by commodity-based export strategies, some African countries have begun touting the idea of leap-frogging to low-carbon service sector economies; Rwanda is often cited as the exemplar.²⁰ The notion of anticipating future demand is important, but the lack of institutional capacity for leap-frogging, and the current political and economic dependence on commodities, will make leap-frogging difficult in many African countries particular those in which cities remain fiscally dependent on national government.²¹ Realistically, commodities will remain important for the African countries that hold them, but supplying these commodities to the continent's rapidly growing cities, under AfCFTA, provides a counter to so-called Dutch Disease (the "commodity curse") and a more reliable value addition opportunity. Linking commodity value chains to expanding urban markets would support *Agenda 2063's* aim to increase intra-African trade from current levels of around 15% if informal cross-border trade is excluded.²²

Effective commodity-industry-urban linking strategies will require closer attention to the means through which both urban and industry are changing under the

influence of technology and climate change. African countries are home to significant proportions of the minerals that are critical to green-tech: 6% of known global copper reserves copper, 53% of cobalt, 25% of bauxite, 21% of graphite, 46% of manganese, 35% of chromite, 79% of phosphate rock, and 91% of platinum group metals.²³ Despite this, Africa's share in the global exports of strategic minerals remains low with 8.3% for raw, and 3.8% for processed strategic minerals, respectively.²⁴

China held the rights to over 90% of the known rare earth minerals in 2018, as Xi Jinping identified rare earths as the "new oil".²⁵ This share has reduced to roughly 75%, but China still processes over 90% of the purchased rare earths. Given that rare earths typically comprise 2-5% of the rock strata in which they are found, mining and processing is almost always highly capital intensive. **African countries hold a negligible share of the "climate change technology patents"** (IP5 class of patents in the OECD classification) required to convert strategic minerals into the clean technologies that the world will demand over the next two decades, making them price takers when trading the mineral rights. The annual registration of "climate change technology" patents (the IP5) increased from 10,000 in 2000 to nearly 29,000 in 2019. Historically, Japan and the US accounted for roughly half of these patent issuances, but China's share of these patents has increased from 2% of patents issued in 2000 to over 17% in 2020.²⁶ **In the broader category of "environment-related technologies", 90,762 patents were filed between 2012 and 2017 but 86.35% of these were from OECD countries.**²⁷ In 2023, over 60% of total strategic mineral ore exports (the total value was over \$42 billion) went to China.²⁸ Strategic mineral exports do still comprise over 75% of export revenue for countries such as Eritrea, Seirra Leone and Guinea, but this speaks to the low value of export revenue for these economies, as well as the potential upside should these countries be able to leverage value addition.

Given the role of intellectual property rights and geo-economic power in the allocation of risks and benefits that accrue from international trade, it is very

17 Usman, Z. & Xiaoyang, T. (2024) How Is China's Economic Transition Affecting Its Relations With Africa? Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

18 Baldwin, R (2025), 'The Great Trade Hack: How Trump's trade war fails and global trade moves on', CEPR Press, Paris & London. <https://cepr.org/publications/books-and-reports/great-trade-hack-how-trumps-trade-war-fails-and-global-trade-moves>.

19 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), (2017), Urbanization and Industrialization for Africa's Transformation, UNECA.

20 Behuria, P., & Goodfellow, T., (2018), Leapfrogging Manufacturing? Rwanda's Attempt to Build a Services-Led 'Developmental State,' European Journal of Development Research.

21 Szirmai, A., & Verspagen, B., (2015), Manufacturing and Economic Growth in Developing Countries, 1950–2005, Structural Change and Economic Dynamics, 34, 46–59.

22 UNCTAD, (2024), Handbook of Statistics 2024.

23 United States Geological Survey (USGS), (2022), Mineral Commodity Summaries 2022. These estimates vary across respective reports.

24 Das, A., & Sharma, S., (2024), Implications of the Energy Transition on African Economies [Working Paper], UNECA.

25 International Energy Agency (IEA), (2021), The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions, IEA, Paris. In this report, the 17 'rare earth' metals are considered a subset of the strategic minerals that are critical for electric vehicles and renewable energy.

26 Montmasson-Clair, G. et al., (2024), Navigating the Opportunity Landscape for Value Chain Upgrading in the Global Scramble for Critical Minerals.

27 Das, A., & Sharma, S., (2024), Implications of the Energy Transition on African Economies [Working Paper], UNECA. The authors relied on OECD data.

28 Montmasson-Clair, G. et al., (2024), Navigating the Opportunity Landscape for Value Chain Upgrading in the Global Scramble for Critical Minerals.

difficult for most African countries to exert bargaining power over their industrialisation, trade and economic growth trajectories. **Without planned and deliberate links to their urban economies, the default is for**

African countries to become passive recipients of expensive green technologies built with their cheap commodities.

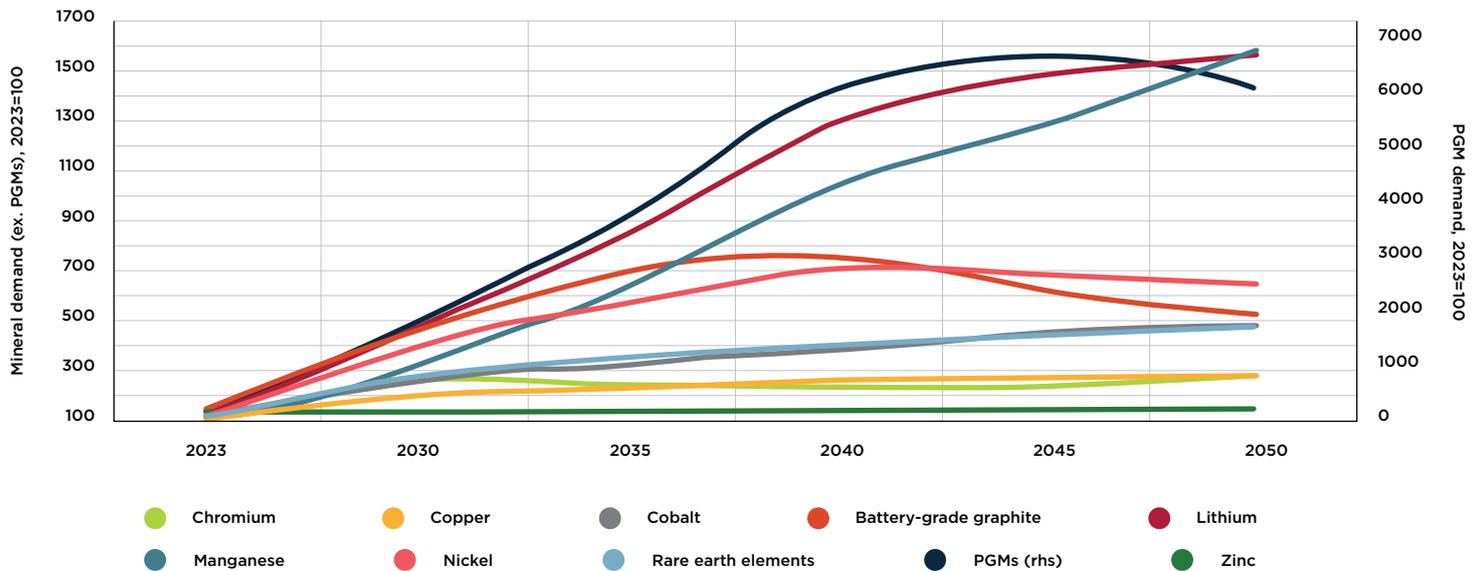


FIGURE 2A: Anticipated demand for strategic minerals and Platinum Group Metals

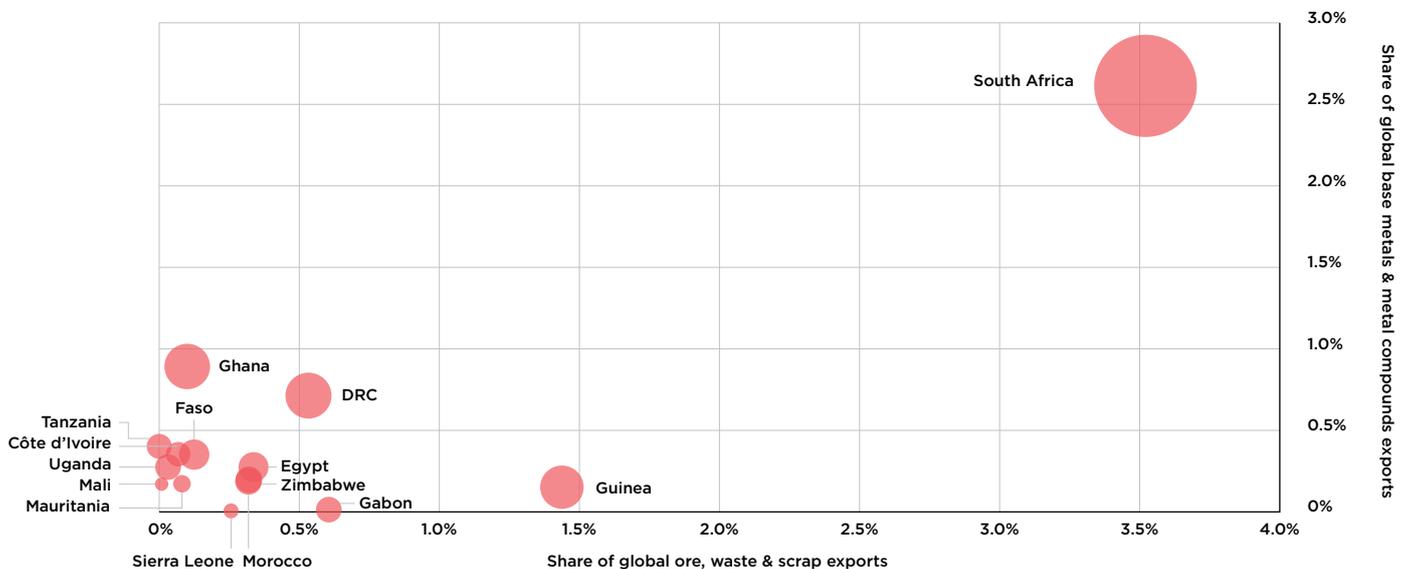


FIGURE 2B: African country share of global ore, waste and scrap exports and base metal exports

Source: Montmasson-clair et al., (2024)²⁹

²⁹ Montmasson-Clair, G. et al., (2024), Navigating the Opportunity Landscape for Value Chain Upgrading in the Global Scramble for Critical Minerals.

Where Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and oil resources are utilised, as seems inevitable, this must avoid succumbing to the terms of trade that has defined historic hydrocarbon extraction. Ghana is just the most recent example of how a fossil fuel dependency ushers in the vagaries of commodity cycles without contributing to urban energy security, economic diversification or macroeconomic stability, while benefitting multinational companies and African elites.³⁰ Nigeria's oil revenue per capita increased ten-fold in the four decades after 1965, but its GDP per capita increased just five-fold and per capita income remained the same, hinting at the difficulty in linking commodity extraction and export to sustainable human development. During the 2005-2014 commodity boom, hydrocarbon exporters experienced growth but this proved unsustainable after 2018.

There are conspicuous examples of ecological destruction and conflict linked to resource extraction and the piping of oil and natural gas that have challenged economic progress in the Niger Delta, Cabo Delgado in Mozambique, Sudan and, more recently, the DRC, Uganda and Tanzania.³¹ **Of the 500-plus oil and gas companies active across Africa in 2018, only six were Africa-owned.³² None of the top 23 institutional investors in new fossil fuel companies in Africa were based on the continent.** (This list is topped by BlackRock and Vanguard in the US, two asset management firms, and the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global). Among the commercial **banks, BNP Paribas, Société Générale, Crédit Agricole and BPCE have all made significant loans to fossil fuel companies or projects at interest rates well above those in their home territories.** Unless ownership structures and the business model are changed, it is these companies, not the citizens of African countries, that will draw down the benefits of the recent hydrocarbon extraction that has captured headlines.

Linking strategic commodity beneficiation to urban manufacturing powered by renewable energy and to the needs of Africa's rapidly expanding cities would provide some of the required bargaining power. **Through policies that promote local processing, DRC was able to refine and process cobalt, boosting the mineral's unit price from \$5.8 per kilogram at extraction to \$16.2 per kilogram after processing and increasing the value of DRC's cobalt exports to \$6 billion in 2022, compared to just \$167 million in**

exports of unprocessed cobalt.³³ Even greater value would be unlocked if DRC were able to link its cobalt production to technologies that could be installed to meet the region's growing demand for clean electricity and mobility – a demand that will only increase as restrictions on deforestation and wood-based fuels begin to impact.

Realising this **manufacturing potential would be supported by African countries pursuing new domestic energy supply options. African countries have more than 60% of the most viable solar (10TW), hydropower (35GW), wind (110GW) and geothermal (15GW) resources on the planet, providing the continent with comparative advantage in the global transition.**³⁴ This will require a departure from the recently celebrated “planned \$245 billion in oil and gas infrastructure” in favour of the estimated \$100 billion per year (a six-fold increase) that Africa requires in renewable energy investment,³⁵ or the \$2.1 trillion that is already being invested per year in renewable energy transitions (renewable energy, power grids, storage and electric vehicles) in 2024; 40% of this investment was in China.³⁶

The five stages of the photovoltaic panel production comprise: (1) quartz or silica extraction; (2) manufacture of solar grade silicon (polysilicon); (3) polysilicon moulded into ingots and sliced into wafers; (4) manufacture of solar cells; & (5) assembly of solar cells for creating solar modules. African countries have small footprints in stages one and five, that could be expanded in urban industries that rely on local components as a means of ensuring that the rapid demand for electricity from Africa's cities is linked to economic activity and work creation. WTO rules permit the levying of taxes on photovoltaic panels where the procurement is for government's own use, a provision that strengthens the case for public sector-led renewable energy rollouts across cities.

Early in 2025, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) came under threat from the swingeing trade policies of the US. Under AGOA, trade between the 17 African “beneficiary countries” and the US had increased from \$195 million in 2000 to \$10 billion in 2022. Of this, 43% of trade value was in the form of petroleum products in 2023, followed by textiles and apparel. South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Lesotho and Madagascar were the greatest contributors to this trade.

30 AfDB (2022) African Economic Outlook 2022. Supporting Climate Resilience and a Just Energy Transition in Africa.

31 Asal, V. et al., (2016), Political Exclusion, Oil, and Ethnic Armed Conflict, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60, 1343–1367; Lawal, S., (2024), As China, Africa Woo Each Other, Who Gains More? It's Complex, Say Experts; Paine, J., (2019), Economic Grievances and Civil War, *International Studies Quarterly*, 63(2), 244–258.

32 United Nations University (UNU) & Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (INRA), (2019), *Africa's Development in the Age of Stranded Assets*, United Nations University Institute Natural Resources Africa.

33 UNCTAD, (2024), *Handbook of Statistics 2024*.

34 International Energy Agency (IEA), (2022), *Special Report on Solar PV Global Supply Chains*.

35 Grant, N. et al., (2024), *Tripling Renewables by 2030: Interpreting the Global Goal at the Regional Level*.

36 Bloomberg NEF, (2025), *Energy Transition Investment Trends*.

The 2025 changes place new emphasis on the AfCFTA that entered into force in 2019 and had been signed by 54 countries and ratified by 47 countries by late 2024.³⁷ The AfCFTA represents Africa's most ambitious effort to integrate economies, boost industrialisation, and create jobs, especially for the continent's growing youth population, but the first formal trades under the

agreement only took place at the end of 2024.³⁸

If fully implemented, the AfCFTA could increase real incomes on the continent by 7%³⁹ and lift 80 million Africans out of poverty according to some economic models⁴⁰ – the World Bank estimate is 30 million Africans out of “extreme poverty” and 68 million out of “moderate poverty”.⁴¹

TABLE 1: Goals and progress under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement/ Area (2019-2025)

AfCFTA goals agreed in 2012, entered into force in 2019	AfCFTA progress 2025
Encourage intra-African trade through a free market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons	Growing value of trade since the agreement (\$192bn in 2023), but still only 12-18% of total African trade. However, only in late 2024 did the first trade actually take place under the agreement
Support the activities of Regional Economic Communities	The African Union recognises eight Regional Economic Communities
Lay the foundation for a Continental Customs Union	No progress, but SACU, EAC and CEMAC remain in place and customs unions too
Enhance competitiveness of African economies	Africa's digital economy, currently valued at \$115bn, is projected to reach \$712bn by 2050, driven by innovations and partnerships, particularly in financial technology
Promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security	Gradual economic diversification, especially in urban economies driven by the growing service sector. Manufacturing sector contributions have declined
Achieve 90% tariff liberalisation by July 1, 2020	Regional Economic Community trade is fully liberalised in SACU, EAC and CEMA. SADC is 73% liberalised. ECOWAS has made good progress on duty free for “industrial products, agricultural products and handmade crafts” – 25% of products – in 13 of the 15 countries. The five African countries in GAFTA have reached 93% trade liberalisation and 59% trade liberalisation in COMESA
Develop pan-African payment and settlement system	Pan-African payment and settlement system created in January 2022
Establish an African Trade Observatory to collect trade statistics	The African Trade Observatory was launched in July 2019 and is led by the AU and implemented by the International Trade Centre. Significant portions of small-scale, cross-border “informal” trade is not accounted for.

37 Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Benin, Togo, Somalia and Madagascar have not ratified AfCFTA.

38 Tralac, (2024), Trade Law Centre.

39 World Bank, (2022), The African Continental Free Trade Area: Economic and Distributional Effects, World Bank Group.

40 Ochi, A., (2023), Inequality and the Impact of Growth on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: A GMM Estimator in a Dynamic Panel Threshold Model, Reg. Sci. Policy Pract., 15, 1373–1394.

41 World Bank, (2022), The African Continental Free Trade Area: Economic and Distributional Effects, World Bank Group.

An African manufacturing strategy that takes advantage of growing demand from the continent's cities and the opportunities for new products and new manufacturing processes that are being generated by climate change is the continent's best hope. This is only likely if industrial strategies on the continent are aligned with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the global climate response and urbanisation strategies (National Urban Policies).⁴⁶ This alignment will have to be backed by fiscal strategies within African countries (taxes, subsidies and budget allocations) and significantly enhanced support from National and Multilateral Development Banks. Policy alignment, the collection

and mobilisation of domestic revenue and the securing of development finance can be significantly enabled by digital and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. The African Union has created important policy frameworks through its Digital Transformation Strategy (2020–2030) and Continental AI Strategy,⁴⁷ but digital transformation implementation has been uneven and uncoordinated across the continent. Data on progress are inadequate in terms of capturing adoption of digital technologies on the ground, but the 2024 Network Readiness Index, suggests Africa lags other regions on digitalisation and AI.⁴⁸

42 Mene, W (2025) <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/intra-african-trade-and-its-potential-to-accelerate-progress-toward-the-sdgs/>

43 AU (2025) The African Continental Free Trade Area <https://au.int/en/african-continental-free-trade-area>.

44 Mangeni, F., & Mold, A., (2024), The Economic Significance of Intra-African Trade: Getting the Narrative Right, In *Borderless Africa: A Sceptic's Guide to the Continental Free Trade Area* (pp. 141–154), Oxford University Press.

45 Tralac, (2024), Trade Law Centre.

46 Mazzucato, M., & Songwe, V., (2024), *A Green and Just Planet: Independent Report of the G20 TF-CLIMA Group of Experts*.

47 AU (2020) The African Union has created important policy frameworks through its Digital Transformation Strategy (2020–2030) and Continental AI Strategy. <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38507-doc-dts-english.pdf>

48 Portulans Institute, (2024), *Network Readiness Index 2024*. Teleanu, S., & Kurbalija, J., (2022), *Stronger Digital Voices from Africa: Building African Digital Foreign Policy and Diplomacy*, Diplo Foundation.

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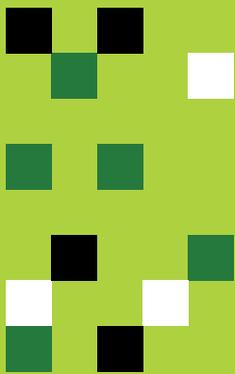
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About the authors of this series

Anton Cartwright is an economist focussed on Africa's urban transition, infrastructure and services, green finance and the interactions between environmental degradation and poverty alleviation. He is an associate at the [African Centre Cities](#) (ACC) at the University of Cape Town, a Fellow of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) at Cambridge University (UK) and was a Lead Author on Chapter 4 of the [IPCC's Special Report on of 1.5°C](#) of warming released in 2018. He led the [New Climate Economy's](#) Special Initiative, the [Coalition for Urban Transition's](#) work in Tanzania and Ghana and was a lead author of South Africa's Just Urban Transition framework in 2023. He is the founding Director of the advisory firm Econologic, and [Credible Carbon](#) South Africa's first voluntary carbon market registry.

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Arindam Jana is based at the African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Trained as an economist, Arindam's scholarship lies at the intersection of urban, spatial, and information economics. His ongoing work in Africa tries to understand how different types of data can be used to interpret complex city-level problems like multidimensional inequality and its spatiality, emergent forms of urbanisation, and wealth accumulation. Prior to UCT, Arindam was based at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, where he was instrumental in the setting up of its Urban Informatics Lab, and leading numerous projects related to the dynamics of urbanisation in India.



About the Urban2063 Coalition

The Urban2063 Policy Brief Series forms part of a larger initiative led by the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town focused on foregrounding the importance of sustainable urbanization as central to Africa's structural transformation in line with the vision of Agenda 2063. During 2025, the work of the Urban2063 Coalition is focused on the deliberations of the G20, with specific focus on the Urban 20 outcomes.

The Urban 2063 Coalition is comprised of contributing partners that include: African Centre for Cities, African Climate and Development Institute, Association of African Planning Schools, ARUP – Africa Region, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (Africa chapter), Centre for Sustainability Transitions – Stellenbosch University, Climate KIC, Club of Rome (Africa Section), Urban Futures Studio – Utrecht University, Women in Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), World Resource Institute (WRI), Overseas Development Institute (ODI) & GSM Association (GSMA).

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