

## recursos naturales e infraestructura

# **T**rade and Maritime Transport between Africa and South America

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Santiago, Chile, March 2001

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United Nations Publication

LC/L.1515-P

ISBN: 92-1-121298-7

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Sales N°: E.01.II.G.57

Printed in United Nations, Santiago, Chile

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## Contents

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<b>Summary</b> .....	7
<b>Introduction</b> .....	9
<b>I. Africa and South America</b> .....	11
I.A. Economic situation .....	11
I.B. Geographic situation.....	12
<b>II. Inter-regional trade</b> .....	15
II.A. Value and volume of inter-regional trade.....	15
II.A.1. The monetary value .....	15
II.A.2. Trade volume in metric tons.....	17
II.B. Major products.....	18
II.C. Major trading countries .....	20
II.C.1. South American imports from Africa.....	20
II.C.2. South American exports to Africa.....	21
II.D. Major trade flows .....	22
<b>III. Inter-regional transport</b> .....	25
III.A. Modal split .....	25
III.A.1. Maritime and air transport .....	25
III.A.2. Types of maritime transport services .....	26
III.B. Bulk shipping .....	27
III.C. Liner shipping .....	28
III.C.1. Services between Africa and the South American east coast .....	28
III.C.2. Services between Africa and the South American west coast .....	29

III.D. Maritime transport costs.....	30
III.D.1. Liner shipping freight rates .....	30
III.D.2. Freight and insurance costs of South American imports from Africa.....	30
III.E. Geography and trade.....	31
<b>IV. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Serie Recursos naturales e infraestructura: Issues published.....</b>	<b>37</b>

## Illustrations

Illustration 1 Map of Africa .....	13
Illustration 2 Map of Latin America and The Caribbean.....	14
Illustration 3 South American countries' value of trade with Africa as percentage of total foreign trade, 1998.....	17
Illustration 4 South American countries' volume of trade with Africa as percentage of total foreign trade, 1998.....	18
Illustration 5 Iron ore storage in Tubarão (Brazil) .....	27
Illustration 6 Dry bulk terminals in Tubarão (Brazil) .....	27
Illustration 7 Route of evergreen's regular liner shipping service between South America's East Coast and the Far East .....	28
Illustration 8 Volume of South American countries' trade with Asia, Europe, and North America, via Maritime Transport, 1998.....	31

## Tables

Table 1 Economic information on Africa and South America, 1998.....	11
Table 2 Freight and insurance as a percentage of imports c.i.f, 1997.....	12
Table 3 Trade between South America and Africa, 1998.....	15
Table 4 South American countries' imports from Africa by value, by country, via maritime transport, 1998 .....	16
Table 5 South American countries' exports to Africa by value, by country, via maritime transport, 1998 .....	16
Table 6 South American countries' imports from Africa by volume, by country, via maritime transport, 1998 .....	17
Table 7 South American countries' exports to Africa by volume, by country, via maritime transport, 1998 .....	18
Table 8 South American countries' trade with Africa, 1998 .....	19
Table 9 South American countries' imports (f.o.b.) from Africa, major commodities via maritime transport, 1998 .....	19
Table 10 South American countries' exports f.o.b. to Africa, major commodities via maritime transport, 1998 .....	20
Table 11 Major African exporters' trade with South American countries via maritime transport, 1998 .....	20
Table 12 Major South American importers' trade with Africa via maritime transport, 1998.....	21
Table 13 Major African importers' trade with South American countries via maritime transport, 1998 .....	21

Table 14 Major South American exporters' trade with Africa via maritime transport, 1998 .....	22
Table 15 Major trade flows (by volume), South American countries' maritime imports from Africa, by country and commodity, 1998 .....	22
Table 16 Major trade flows (by volume), South American countries' maritime exports to Africa, by country and commodity, 1998. ....	23
Table 17 Relative importance of the maritime transport in inter-regional trade, by volume, 1998.....	25
Table 18 Relative importance of the maritime transport in inter-regional trade,by value, 1998.....	26
Table 19 Maritime distance between South American and African ports, nautical miles.....	28
Table 20 Freight and insurance costs of South American maritime imports from Africa, 1998 .....	30



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## Summary

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Trade between Africa and South America is of relatively minor importance for each region. The main purpose of this report is to determine if a scarcity of maritime transport services could explain this comparative unimportance.

More than half of all trade between the two regions is accounted for by just ten specific bilateral flows in petroleum, grain, iron ore, coal, and sugar. Almost all inter-regional trade moves by sea, mostly by non-liner charter shipping services. Trade between Africa and South America is subject to relatively low freight rates, mainly due to the type of products traded, which are of a bulk nature rather than manufactured goods.

Trade patterns are the main determinant of the supply of transport services, and there is little trade between Africa and South America for historical reasons, the lack of preferential trade agreements between the two regions, and because their economies do not necessarily complement each other. Wherever there is a demand for transport, be it for Argentinean grain in Egypt, for cotton from Benin in Brazil, for iron ore from Brazil in South Africa, or for petroleum from Nigeria in Chile, no fundamental shortage of supply of shipping services can be identified. There appears to exist a potential to generally reduce international transport costs in Africa and South America by port modernization.

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