Evolution of the structure of trade in Africa and SubSaharan Africa from 1995 to 2019

Jacques Berthelot (jacques.berthelot4@wanadoo.fr), SOL, December 9, 2020

These slides accompany the word document "In spite of its many sponsors, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) goes into the wall" :

I - External and internal trade of the world's continents from 1995 to 2019

II - External and internal trade of the major regions of Africa from 1995 to 2019

2.1 - Contradictions in African REC States according to UNCTAD and EU EPAs

2.2 - Percentage of extra-African trade in world trade

2.3 - Percentage of intra-African trade in their world and African trade

2.4 - Percentage of African intra-REC trade in their African trade

III - Trade in agricultural products, manufactured goods and fuel-minerals-metals

3.1 - Classification of products

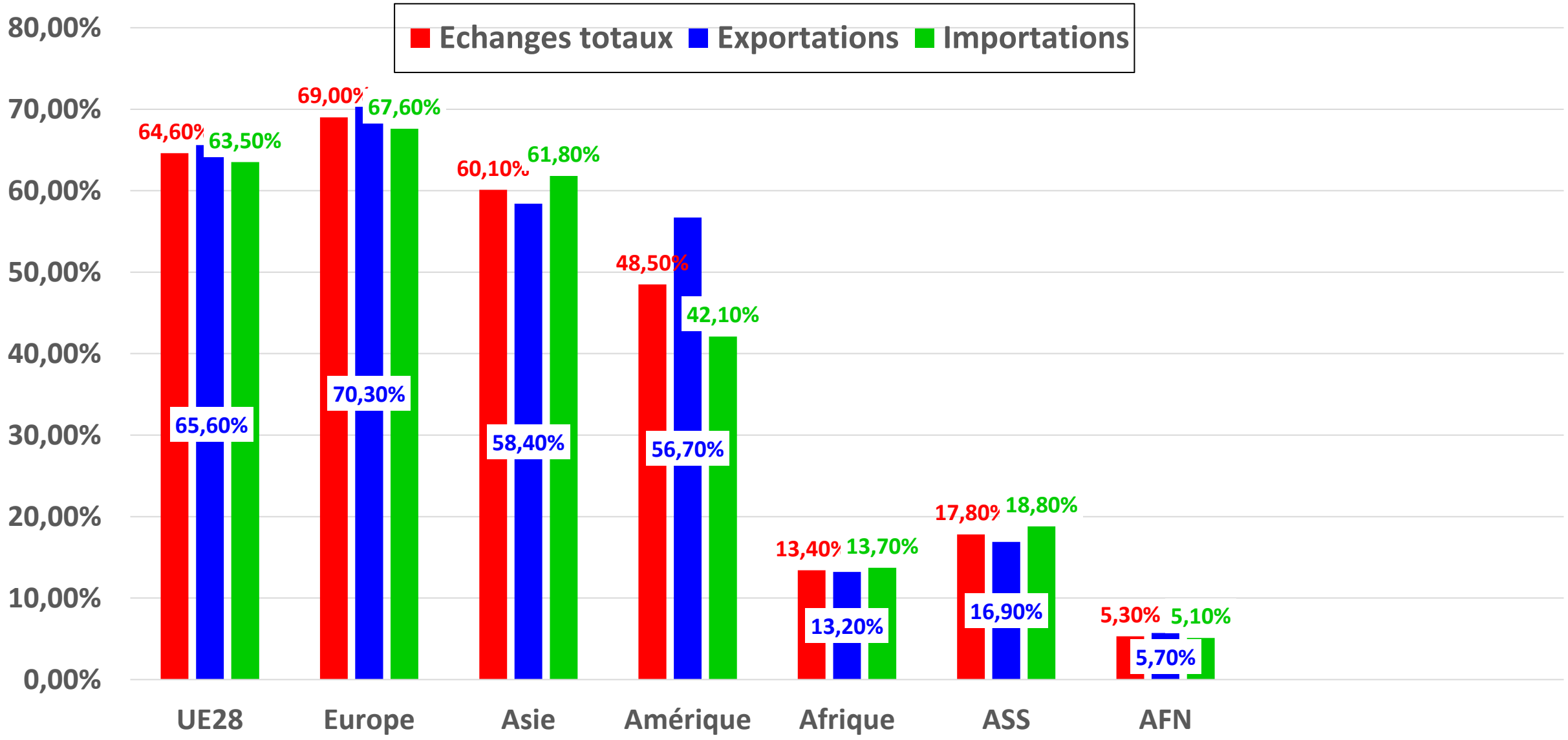
3.2 - Distribution of Africa and SSA exports and imports between products

IV - The growing manufacturing trade deficit in Africa and SSA

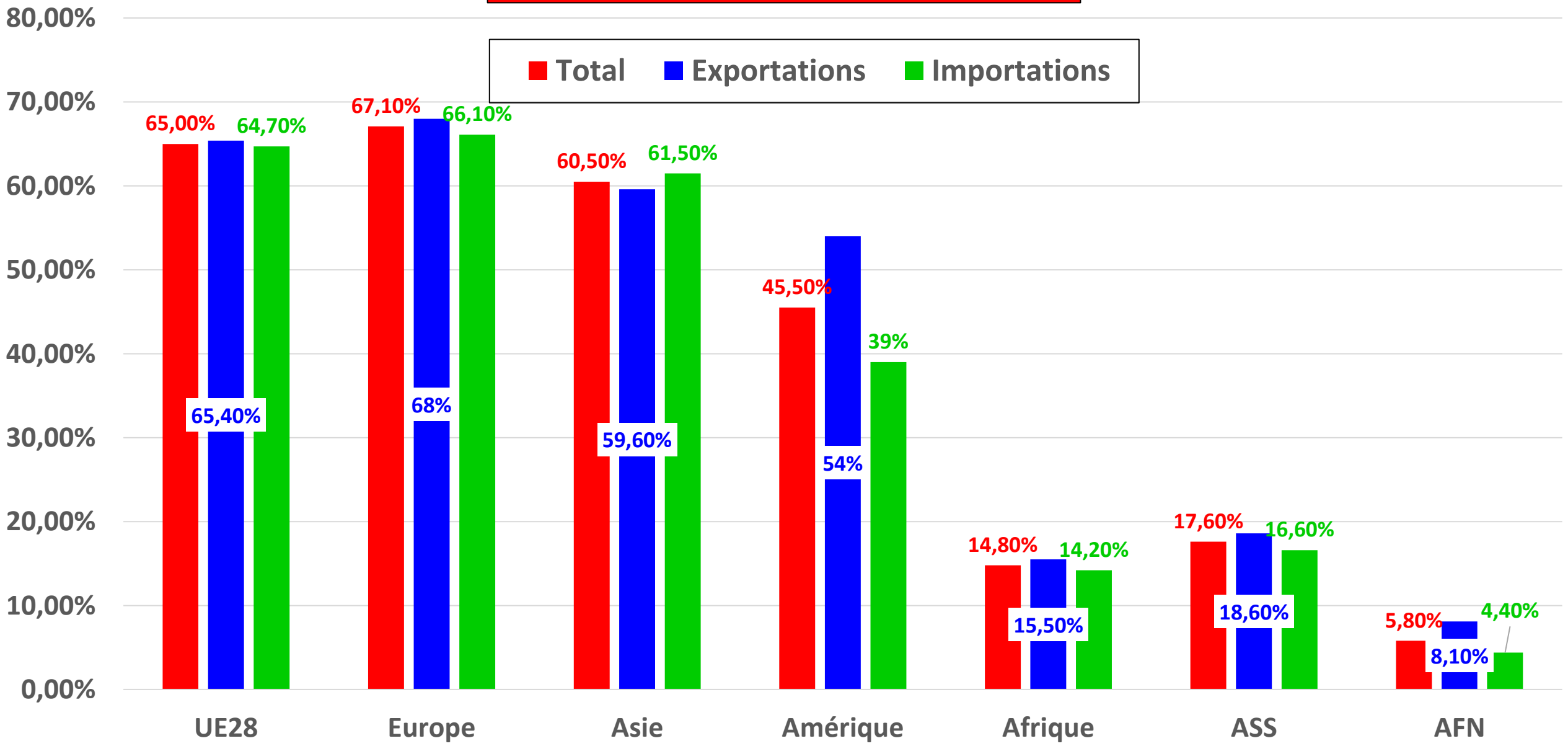
V - Trade in fuels, minerals and metals in Africa and SSA from 1995 to 2019

VI - Agricultural and Food Trade in Africa and SSA from 1995 to 2019

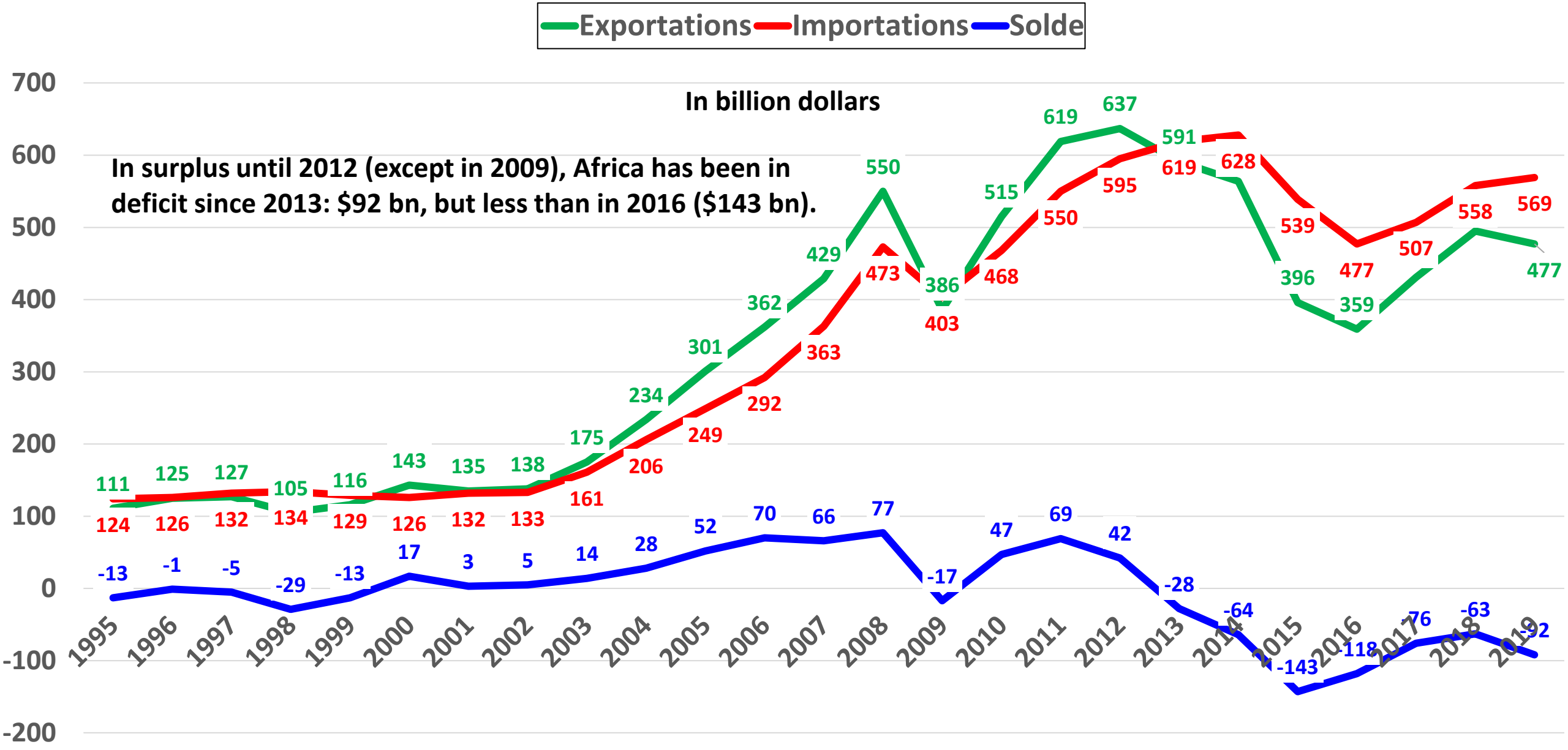
Rate of intra-continental trade in world trade from 1995 à 2019



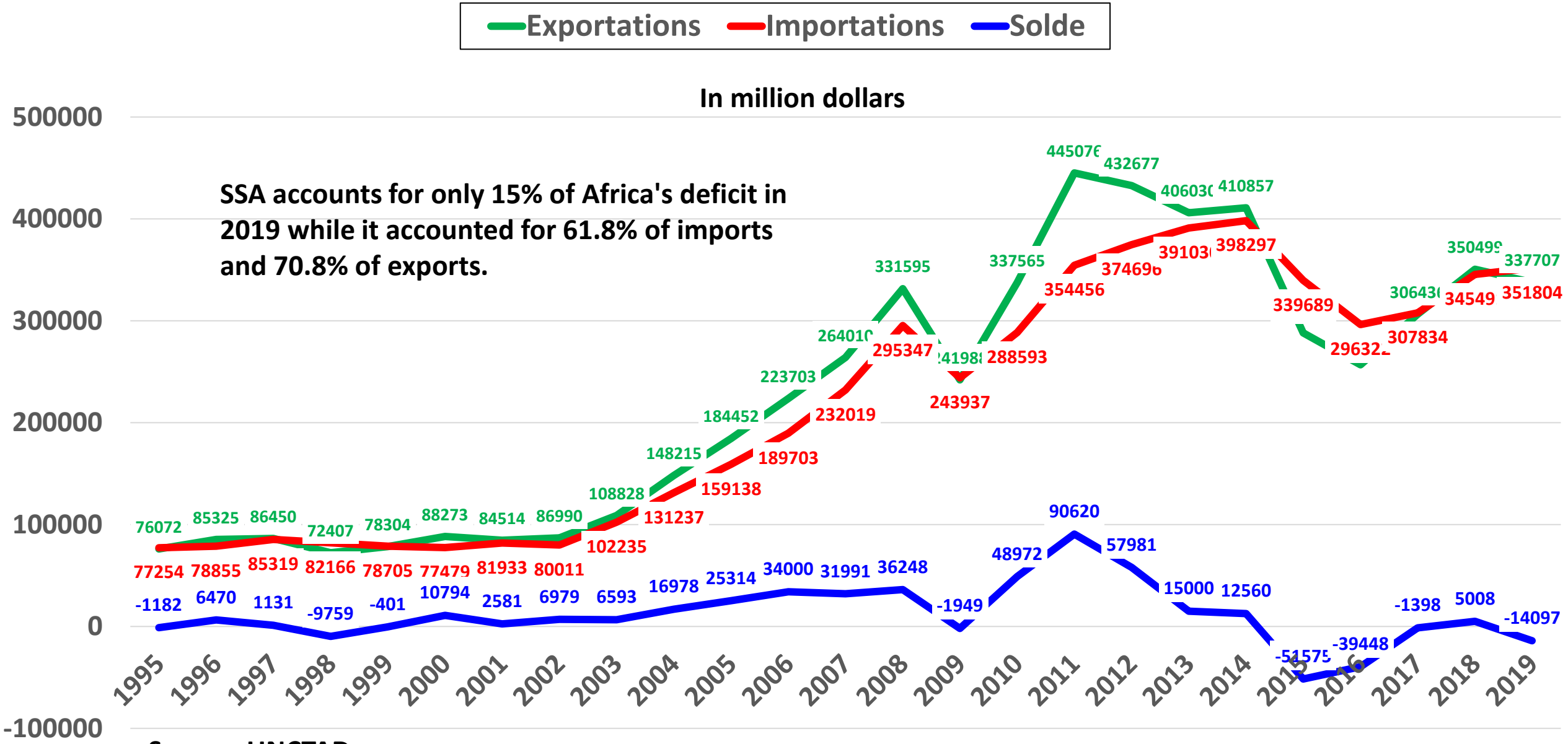
Rate of intra-continental trade in world trade in 2019



Trade of all products in Africa from 1995 to2019

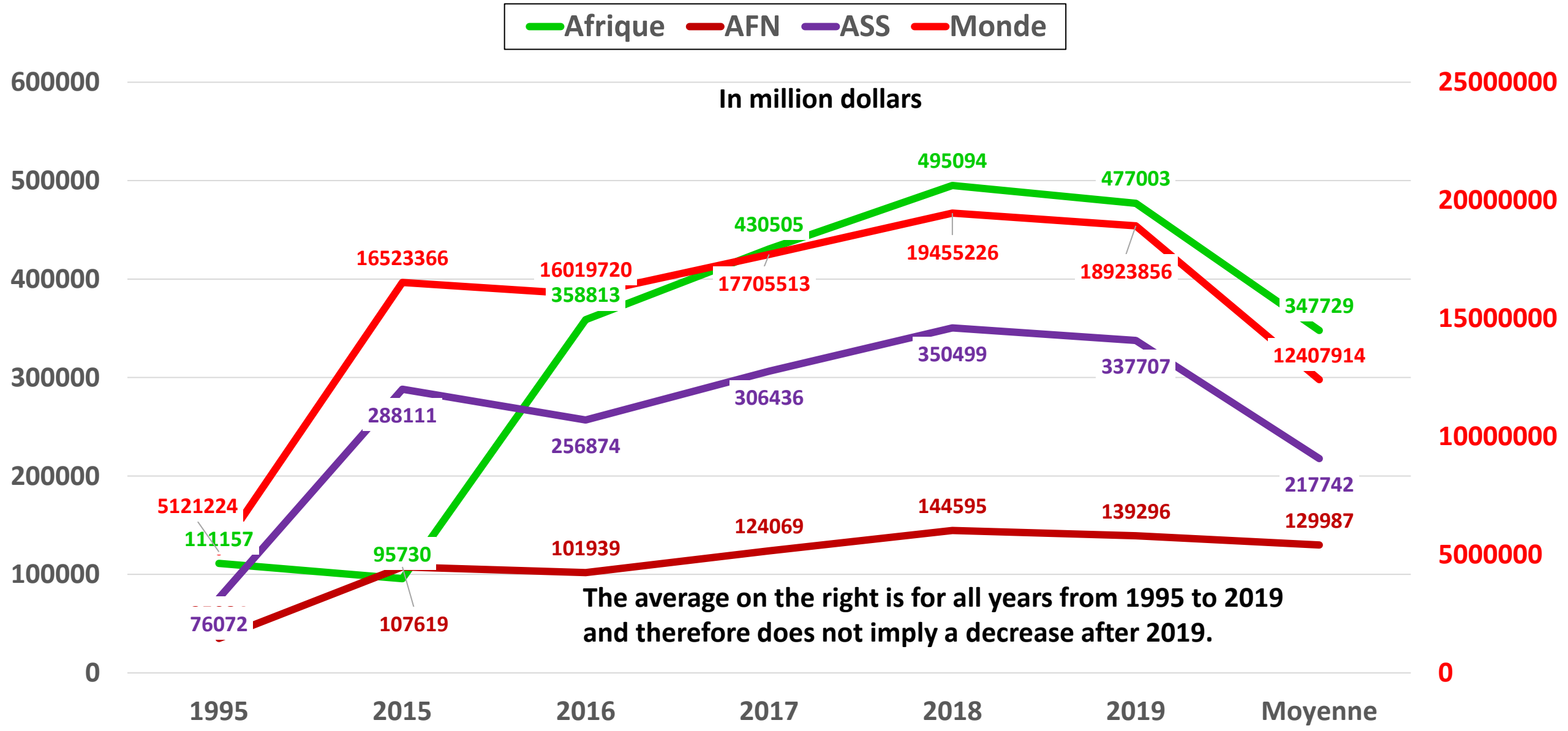


Trade of all products of SubSaharan Africa: 1995-2019

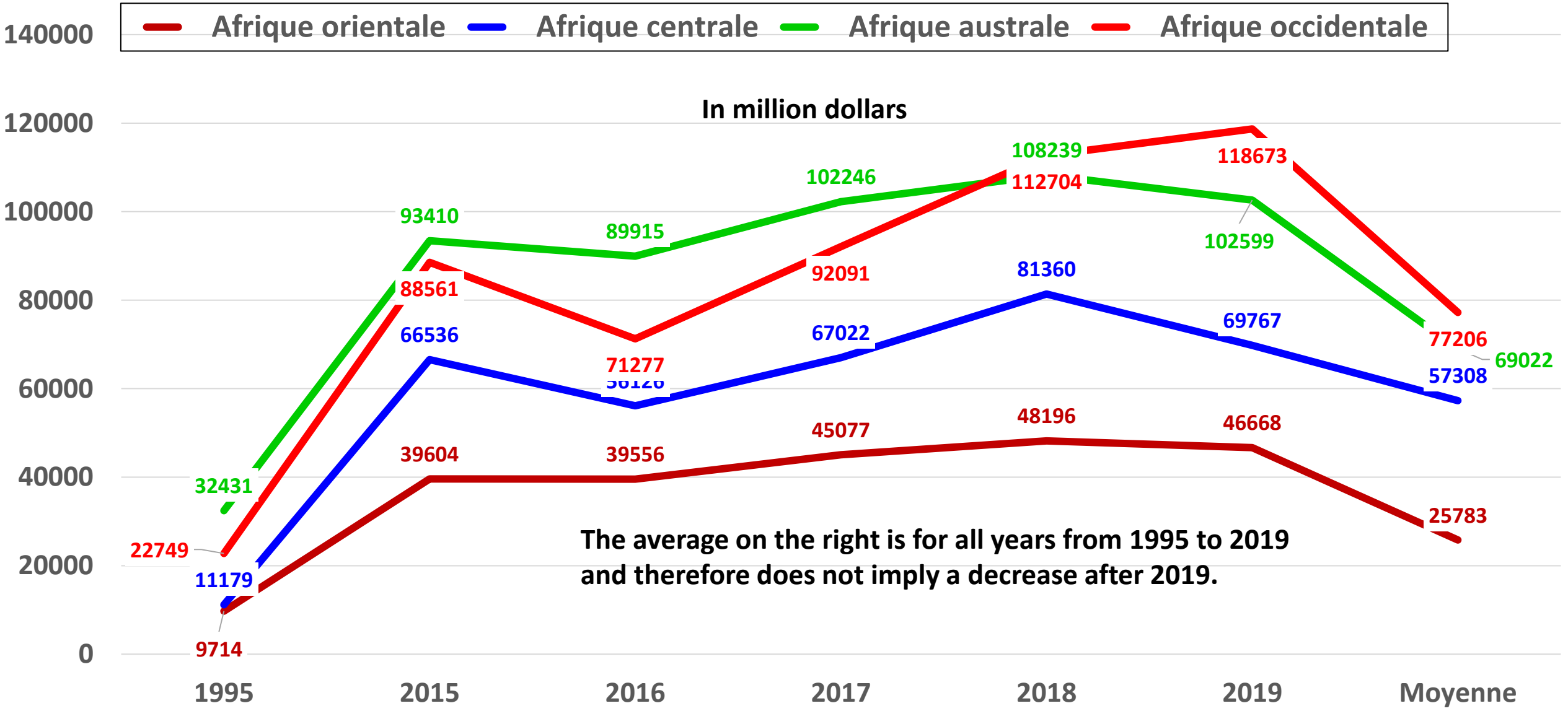


Source: UNCTAD

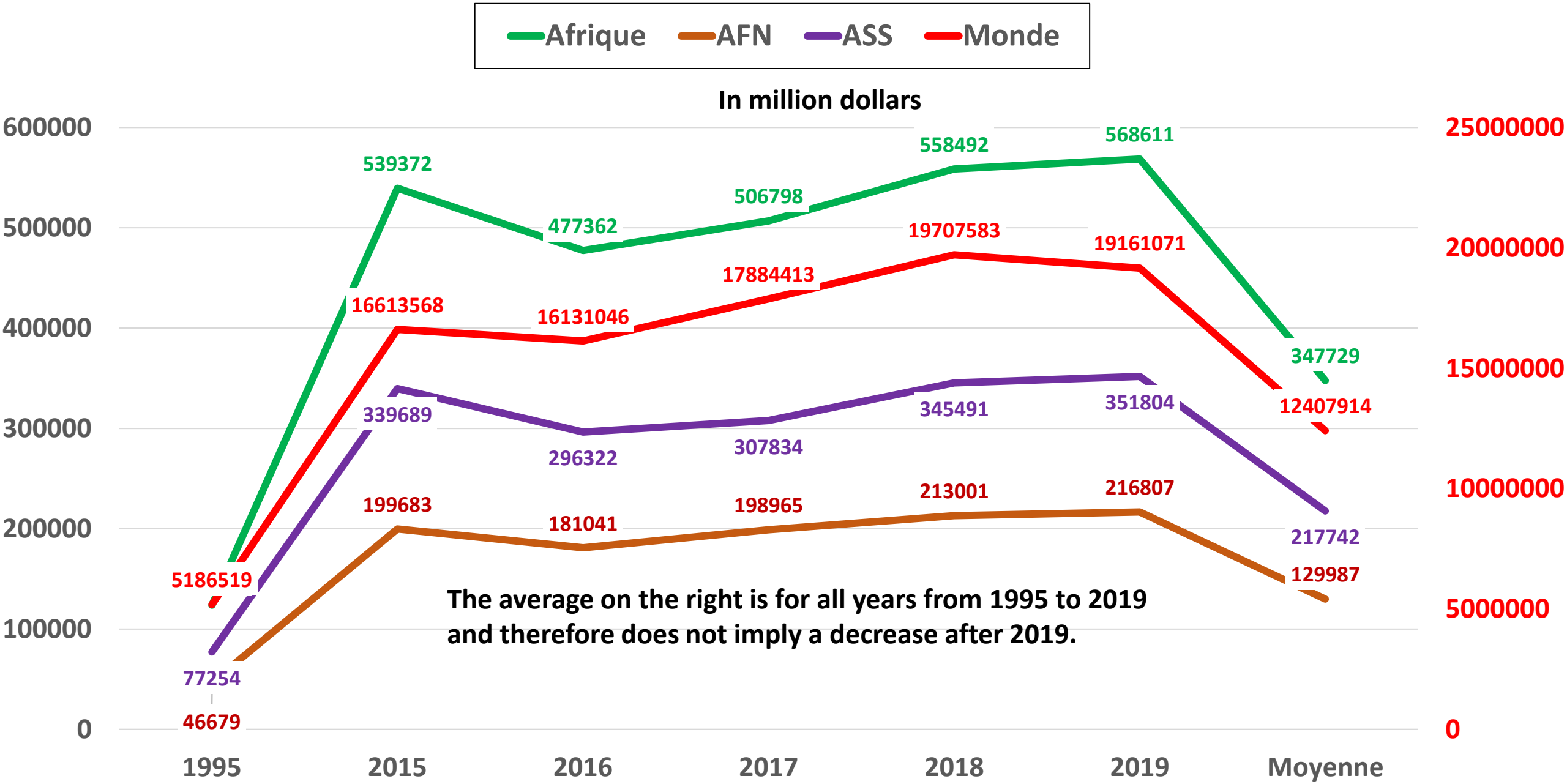
Total world exports of African regions: 1995-2019



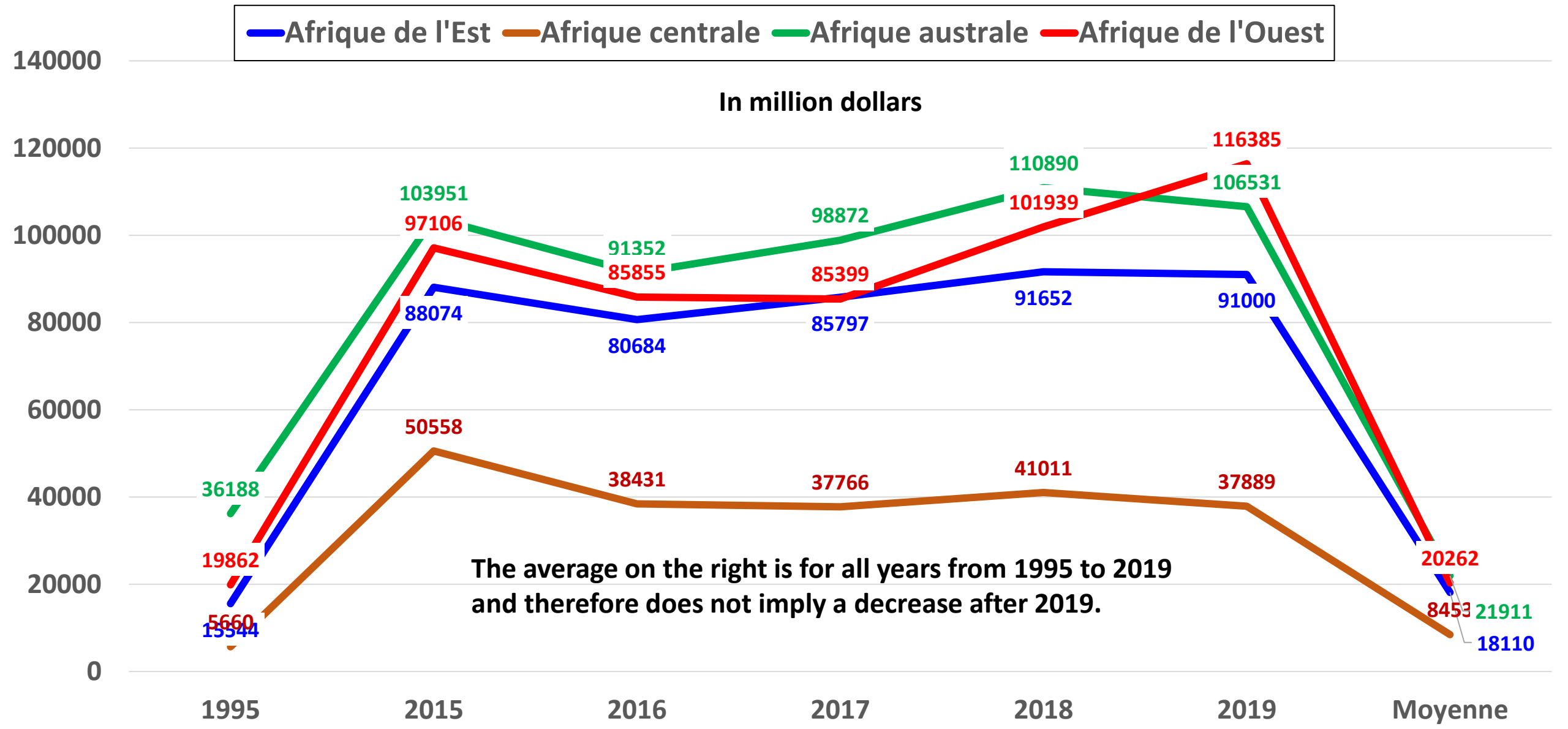
World exports of SubSaharan African regions: 1995-2019



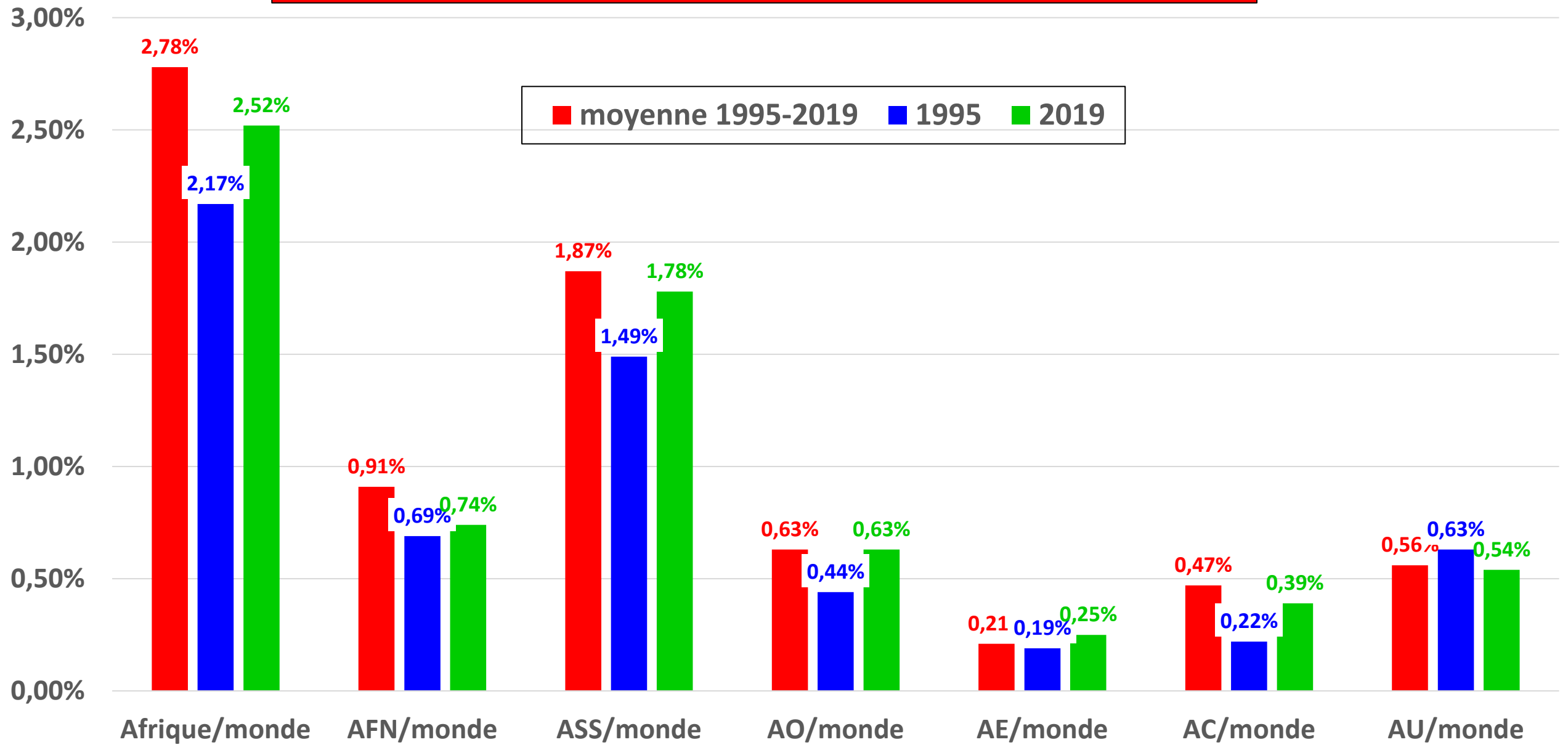
World imports from African regions: 1995- 2019



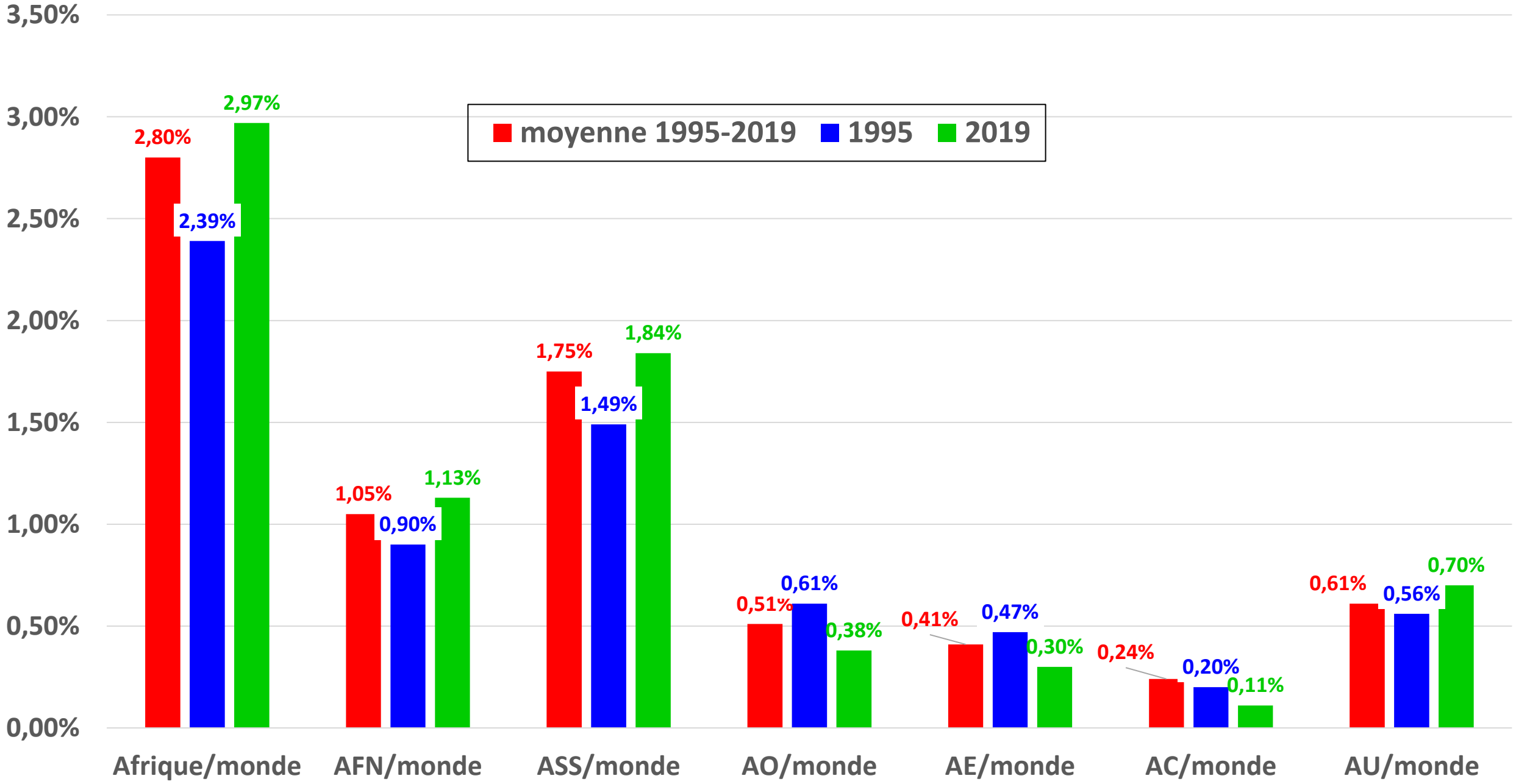
World imports of the SubSaharan regions: 1995-2019



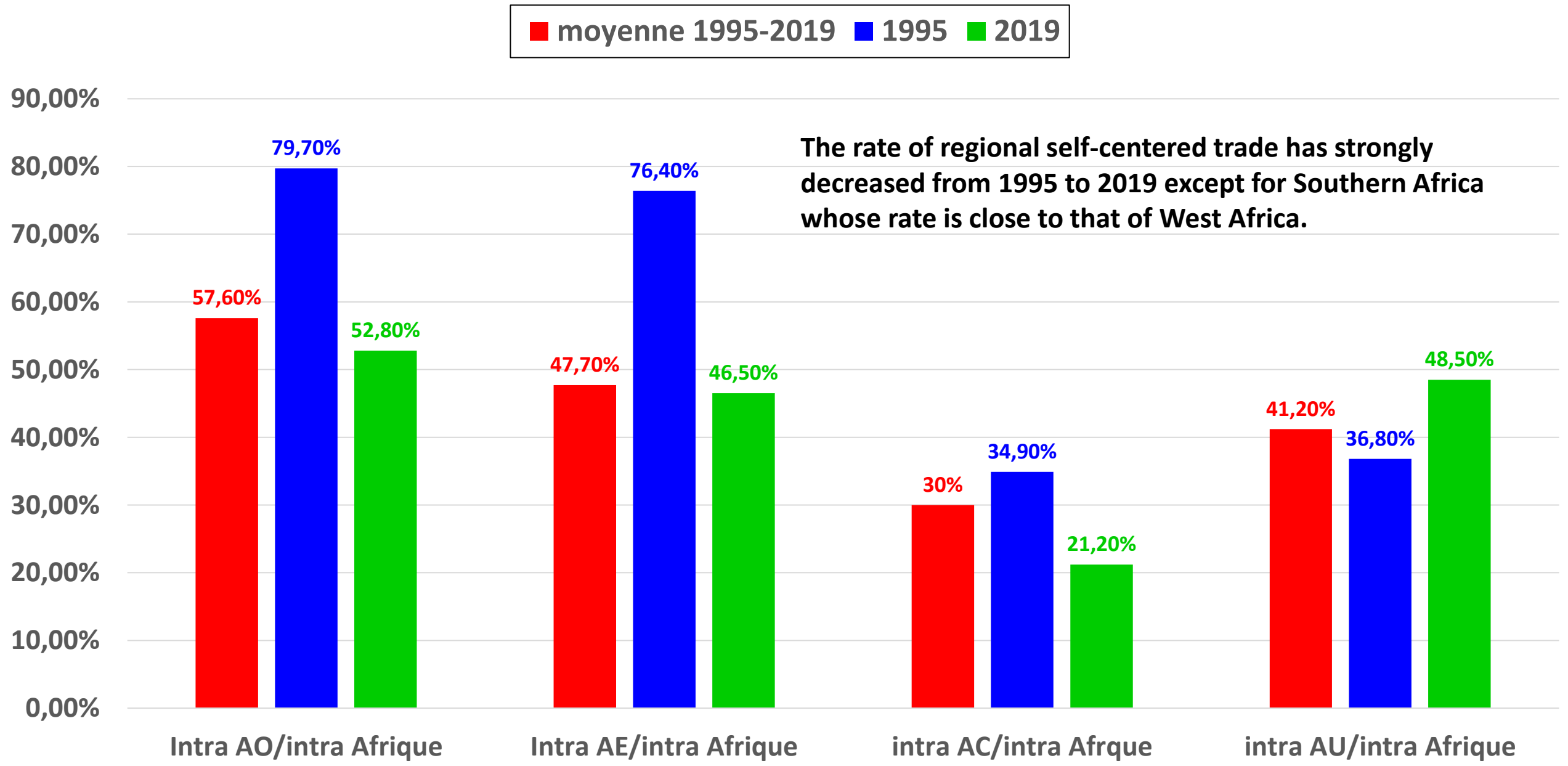
Share of African regions in world exports from 1995 to 2019



Share of African regions in world imports from 1995 to 2019

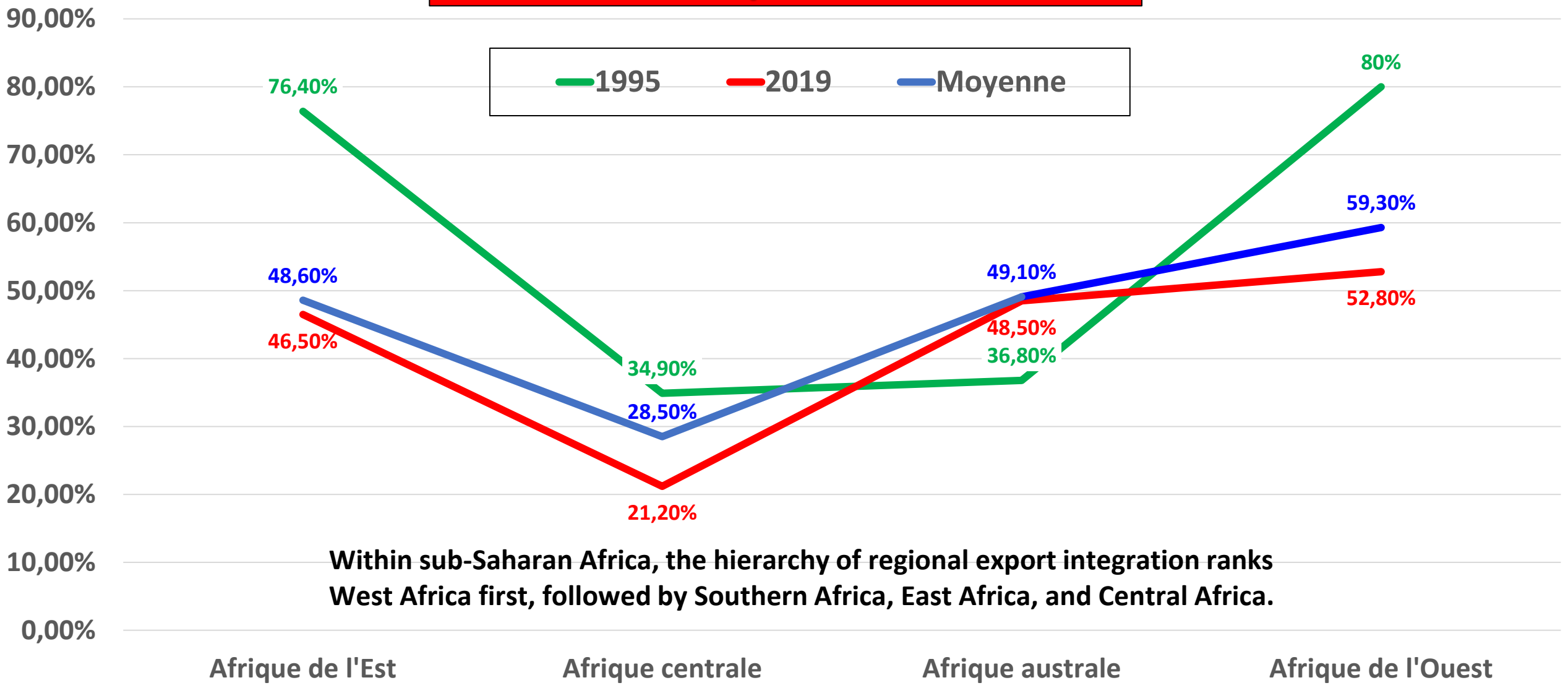


Rate of self-centered trade of SSA regions from 1995 to 2019



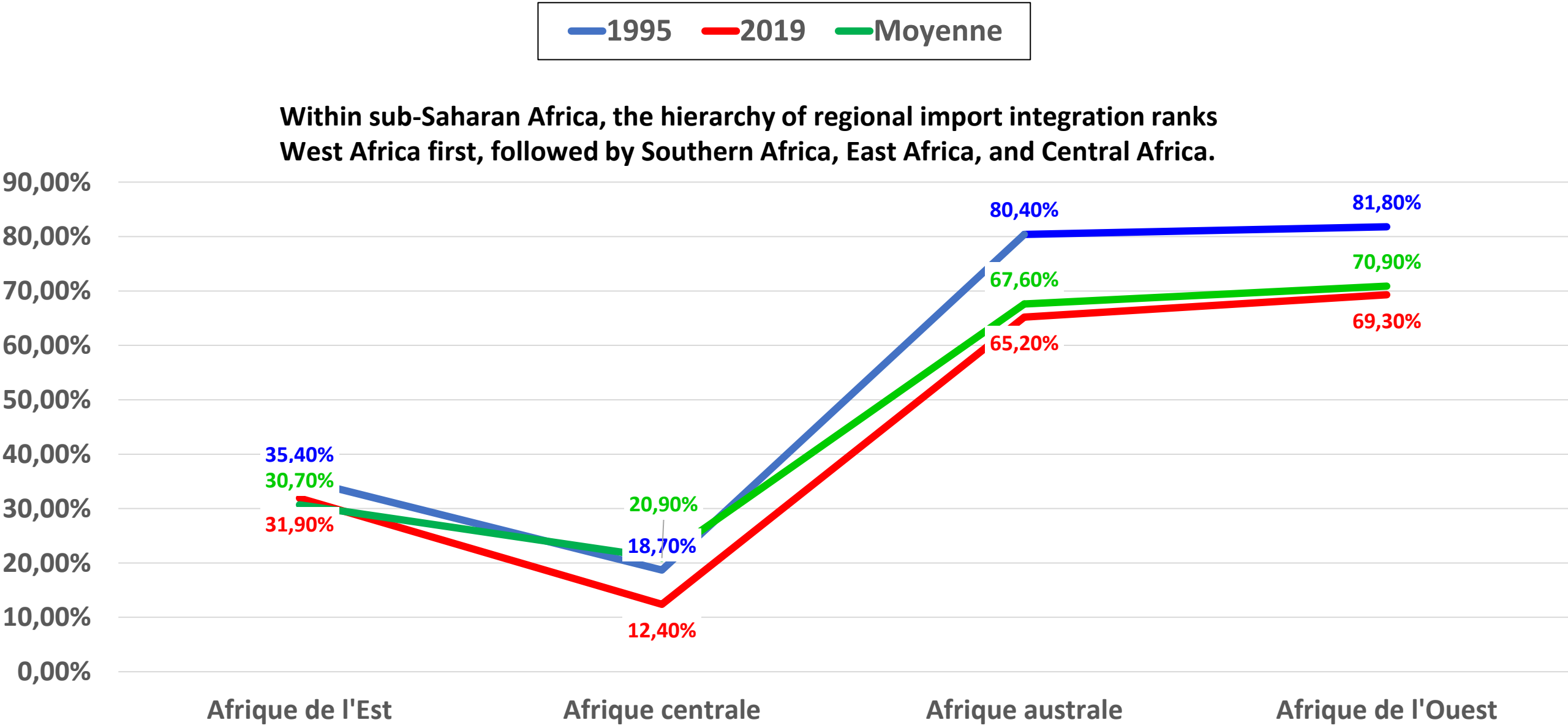
The rate of regional self-centered trade has strongly decreased from 1995 to 2019 except for Southern Africa whose rate is close to that of West Africa.

Percent of SSA intra-regional exports over its exports to Africa



Within sub-Saharan Africa, the hierarchy of regional export integration ranks West Africa first, followed by Southern Africa, East Africa, and Central Africa.

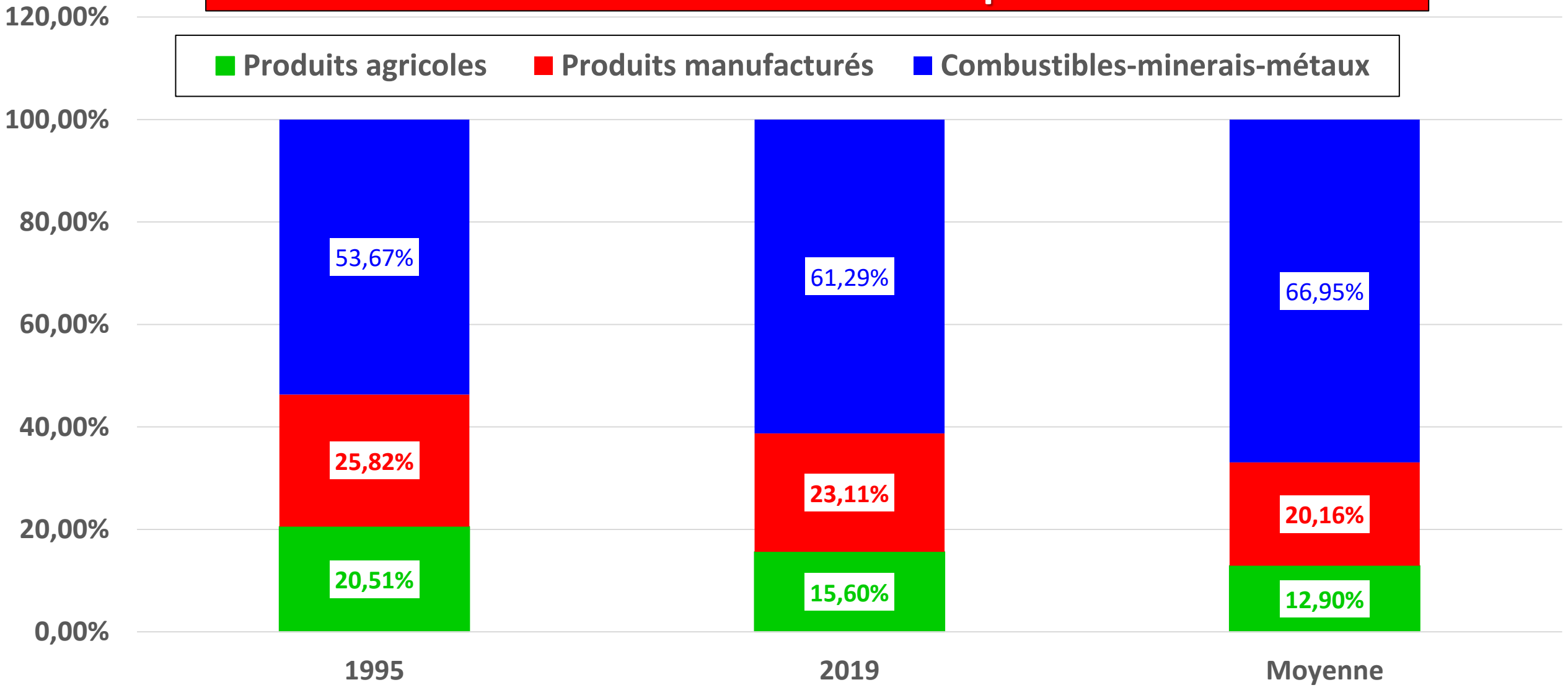
Percent of SSA intra-regional imports over its imports from Africa



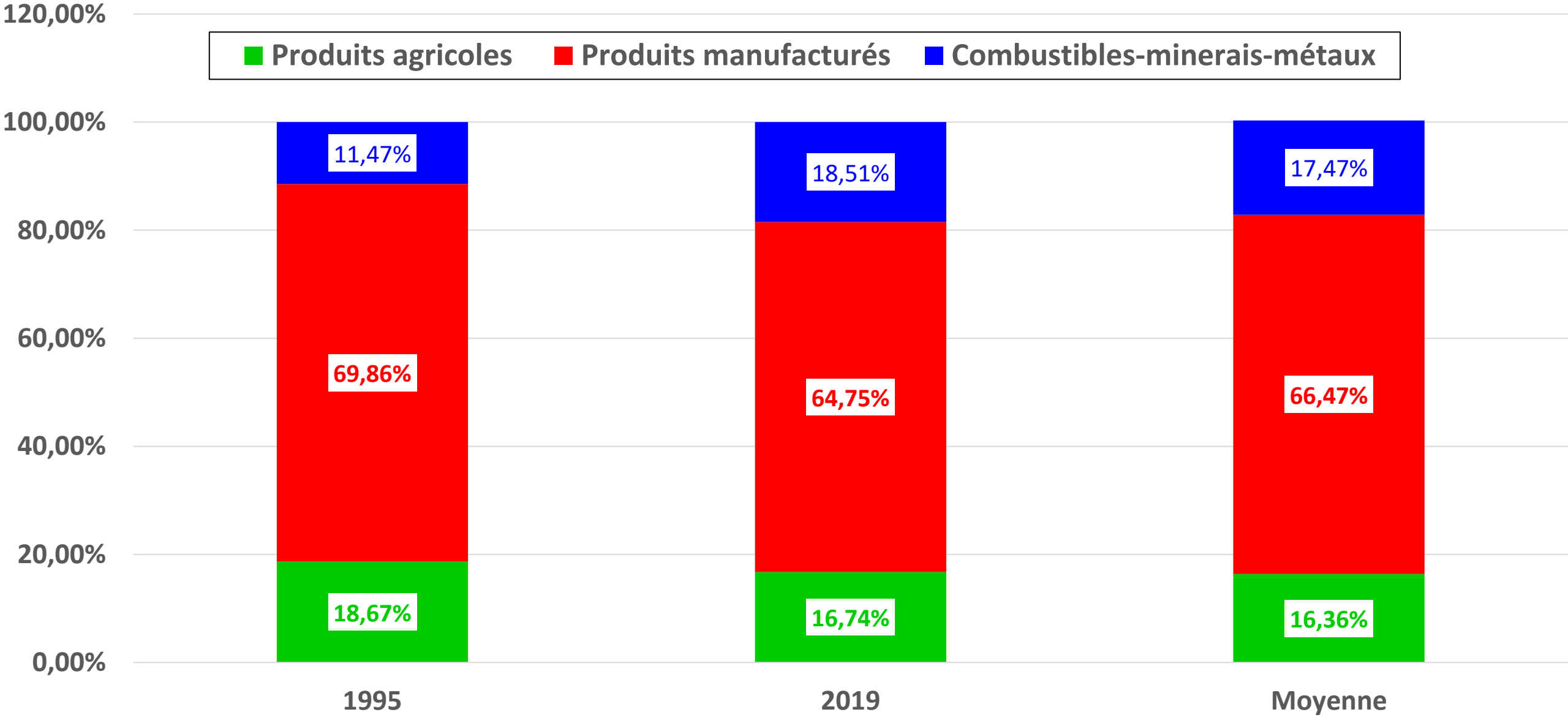
Comments of slides 16 to 19 on the distribution of products traded by Africa and SSA from 1995 to 2019

The percentage of agricultural exports has fallen sharply since 1995, although it has risen sharply since 2012, while the percentage of agricultural imports has stagnated, without being compensated by more exports of manufactured products, but only by more exports of fuels, minerals and metals (slide 20), reflecting a stagnation of specialization in the export of unprocessed primary products in an "extractivist" economy.

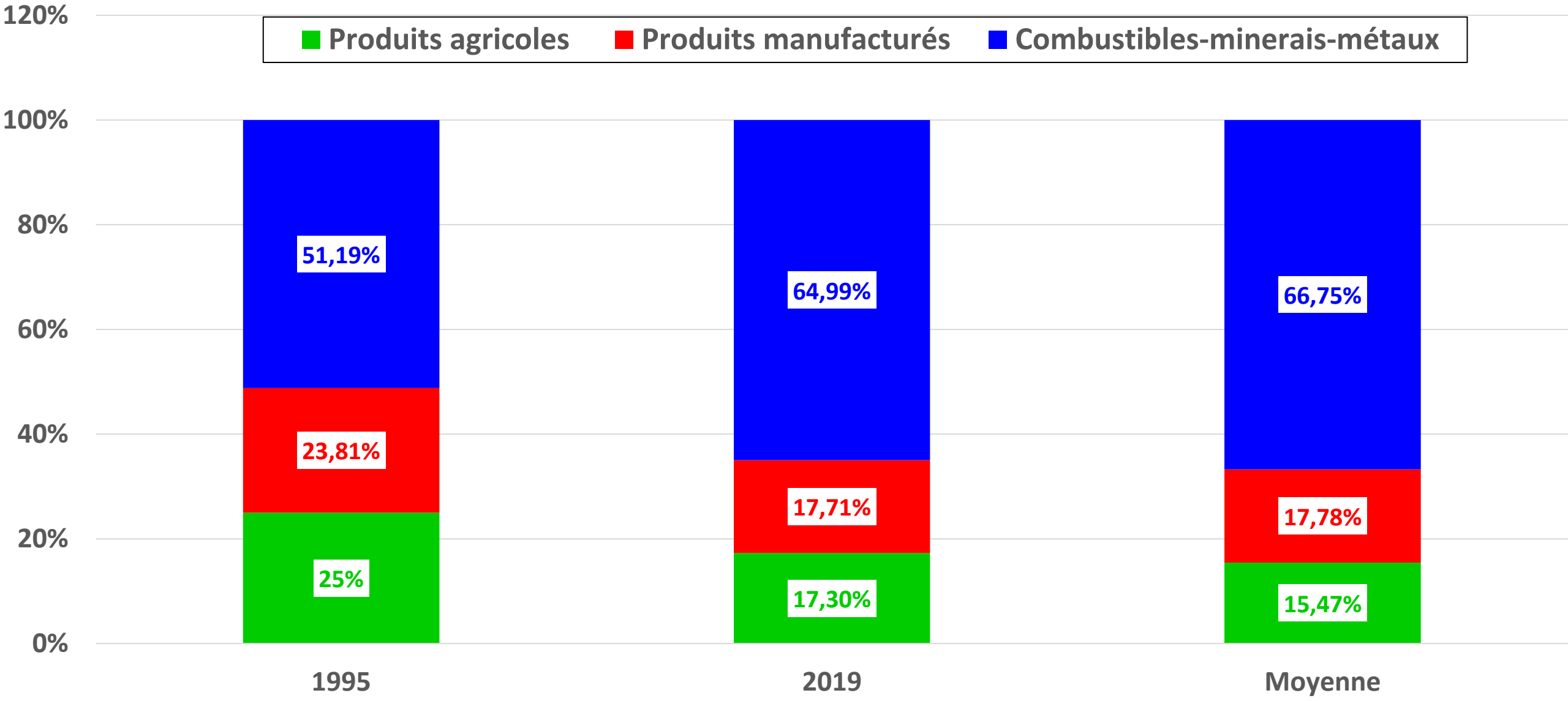
Distribution of African exports between agricultural products, manufactured and fuel-metals-minerals products: 1995 to 2019



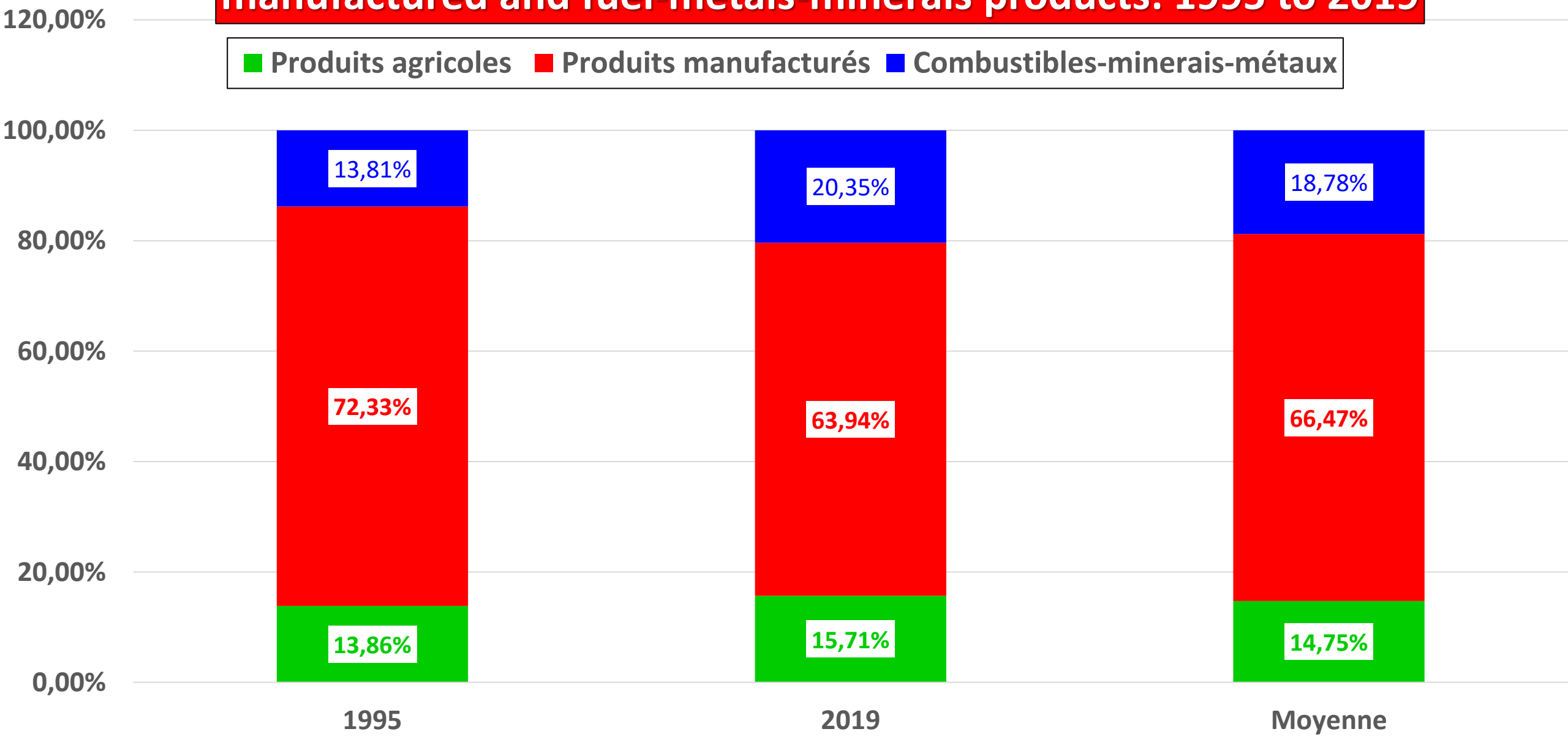
Distribution of African imports between agricultural products, manufactured and fuel-metals-minerals products: 1995 to 2019



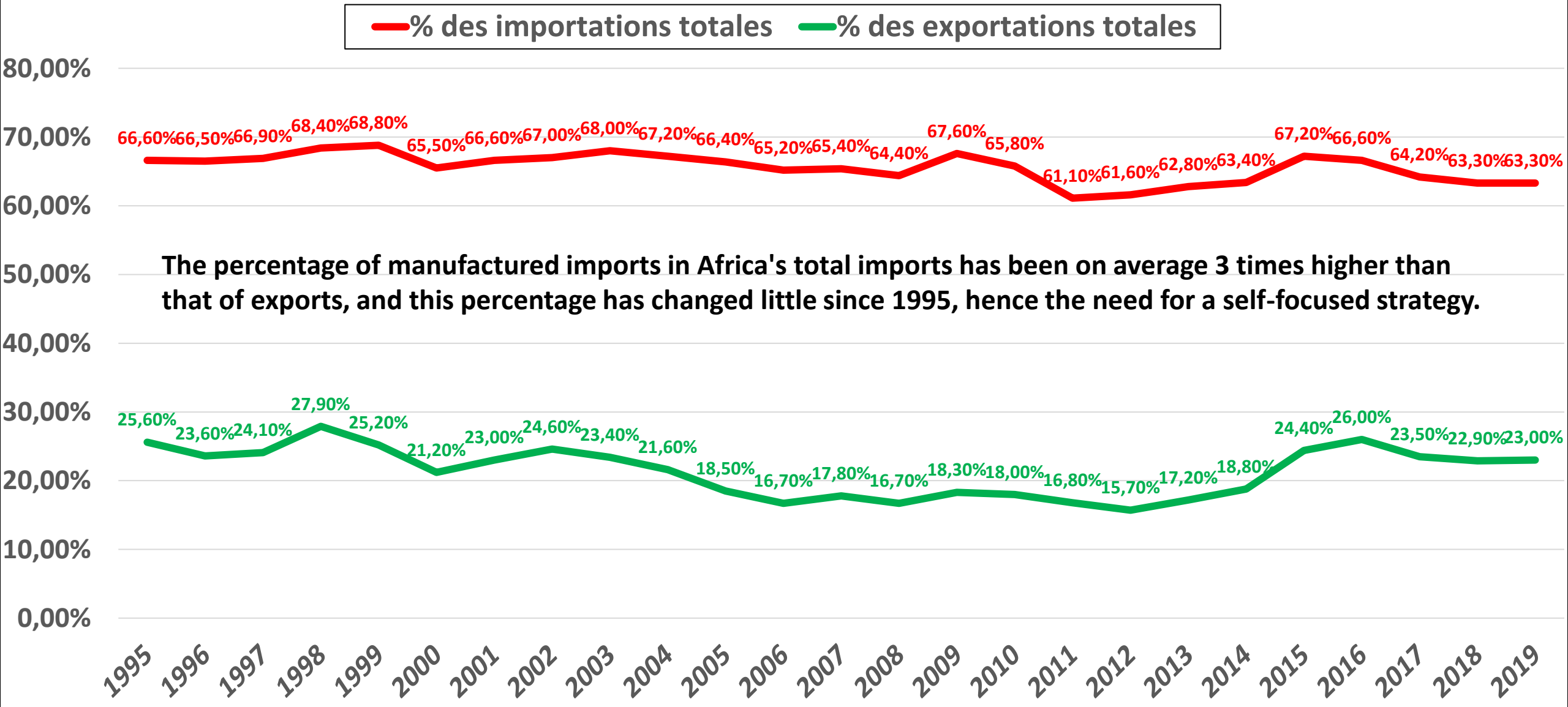
Distribution of SSA exports between agricultural products, manufactured and fuel-metals-minerals products: 1995 to 2019



Distribution of SSA imports between agricultural products, manufactured and fuel-metals-minerals products: 1995 to 2019

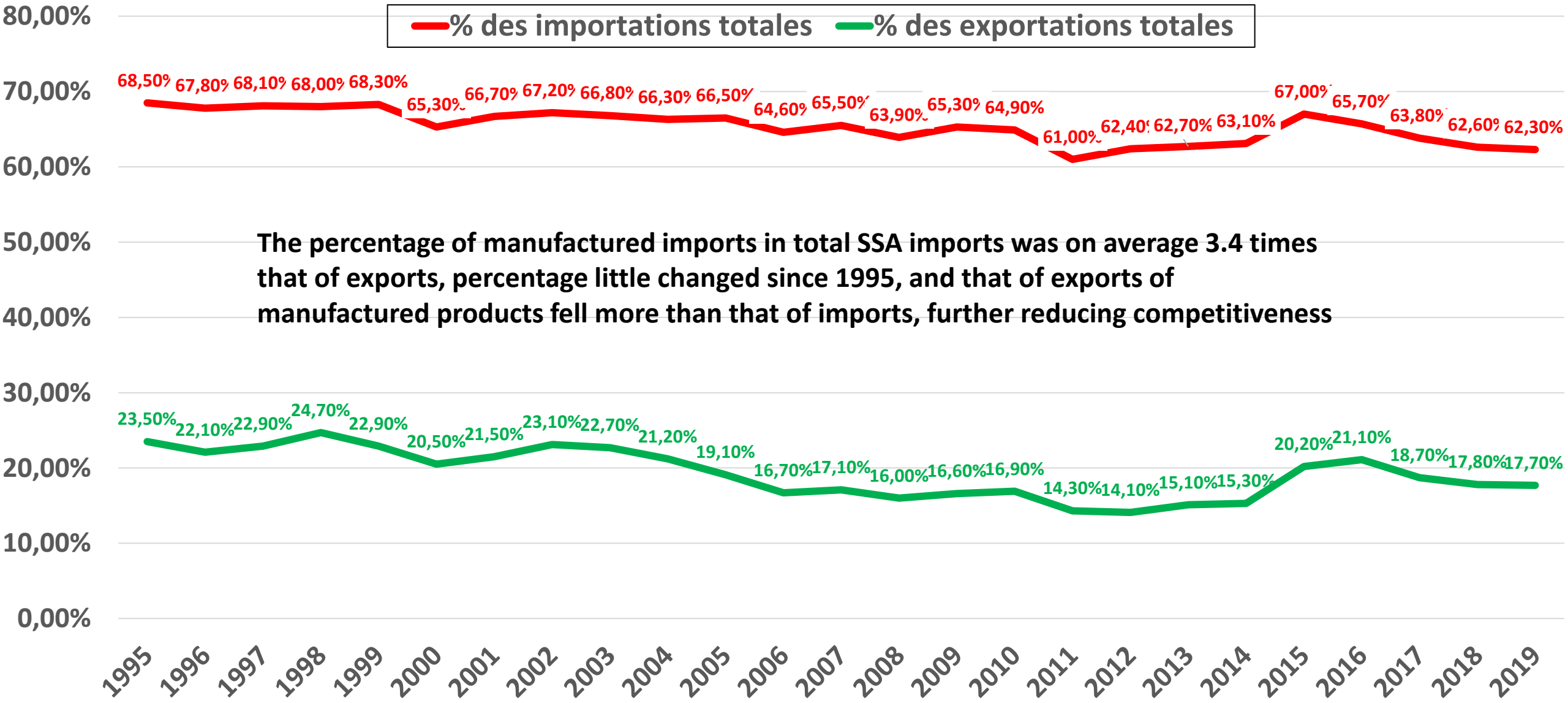


Percent of manufactured products in African total trade from 1995 to 2019



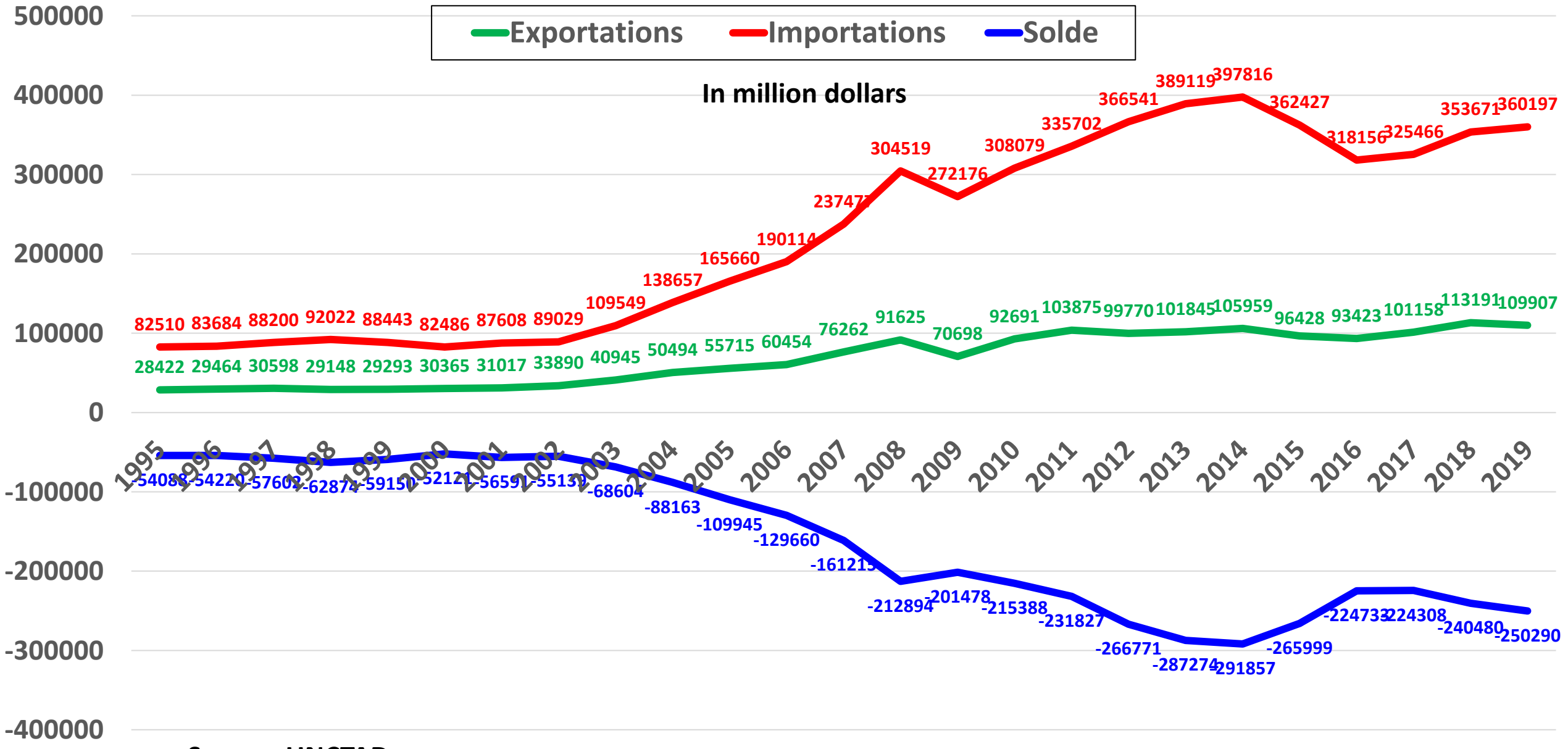
The percentage of manufactured imports in Africa's total imports has been on average 3 times higher than that of exports, and this percentage has changed little since 1995, hence the need for a self-focused strategy.

Percent of manufactured products in SSA total trade from 1995 to 2019



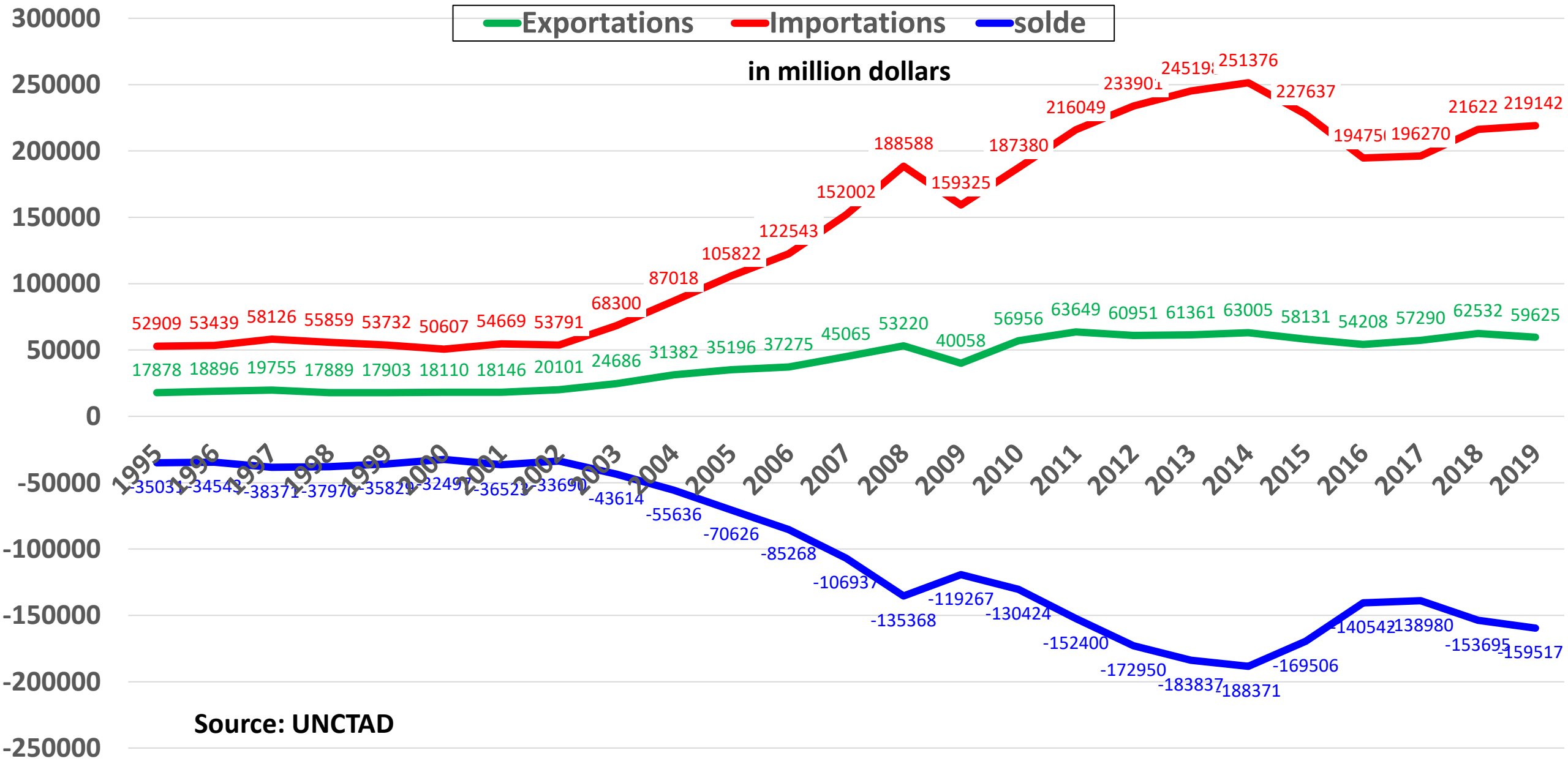
The percentage of manufactured imports in total SSA imports was on average 3.4 times that of exports, percentage little changed since 1995, and that of exports of manufactured products fell more than that of imports, further reducing competitiveness

Trade of African manufactured products from 1995 to 2019

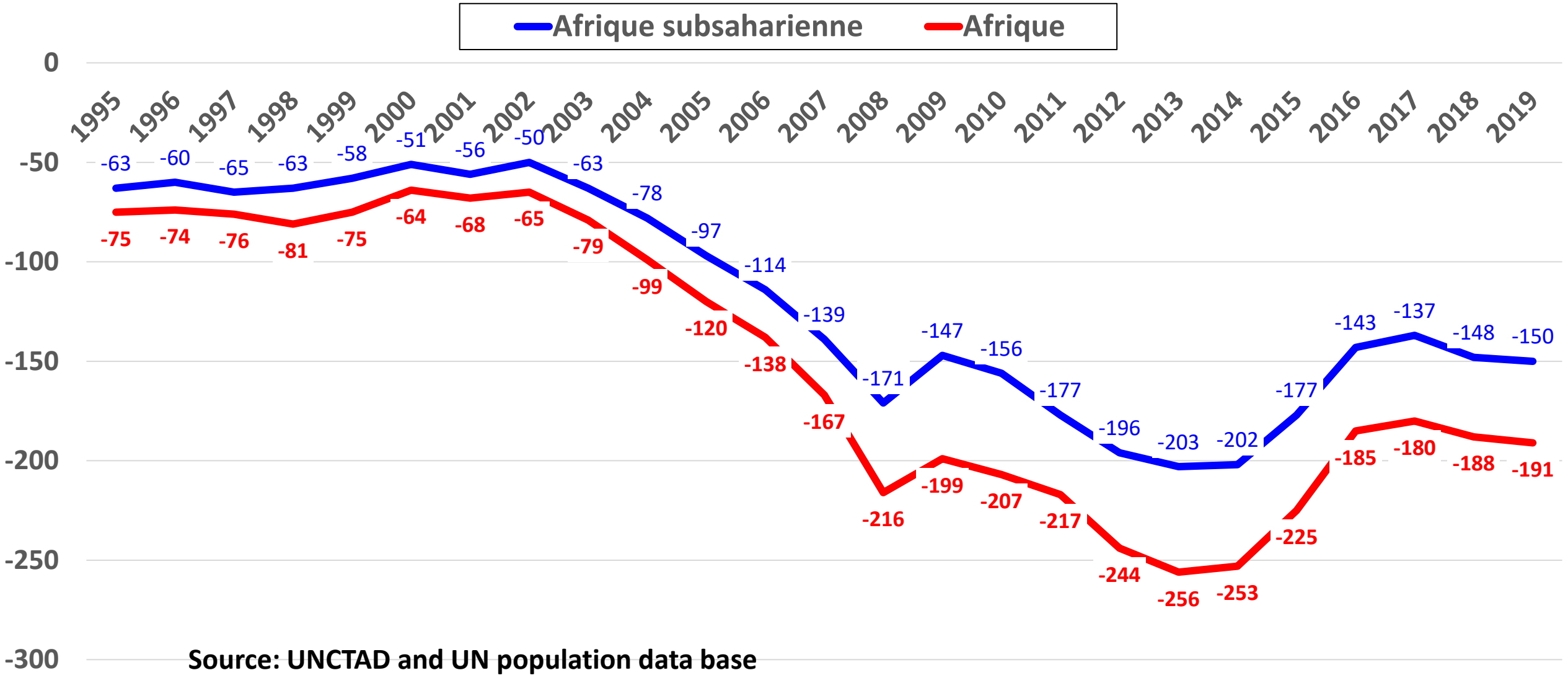


Source: UNCTAD

Trade of SSA manufactured products: 1995-2019

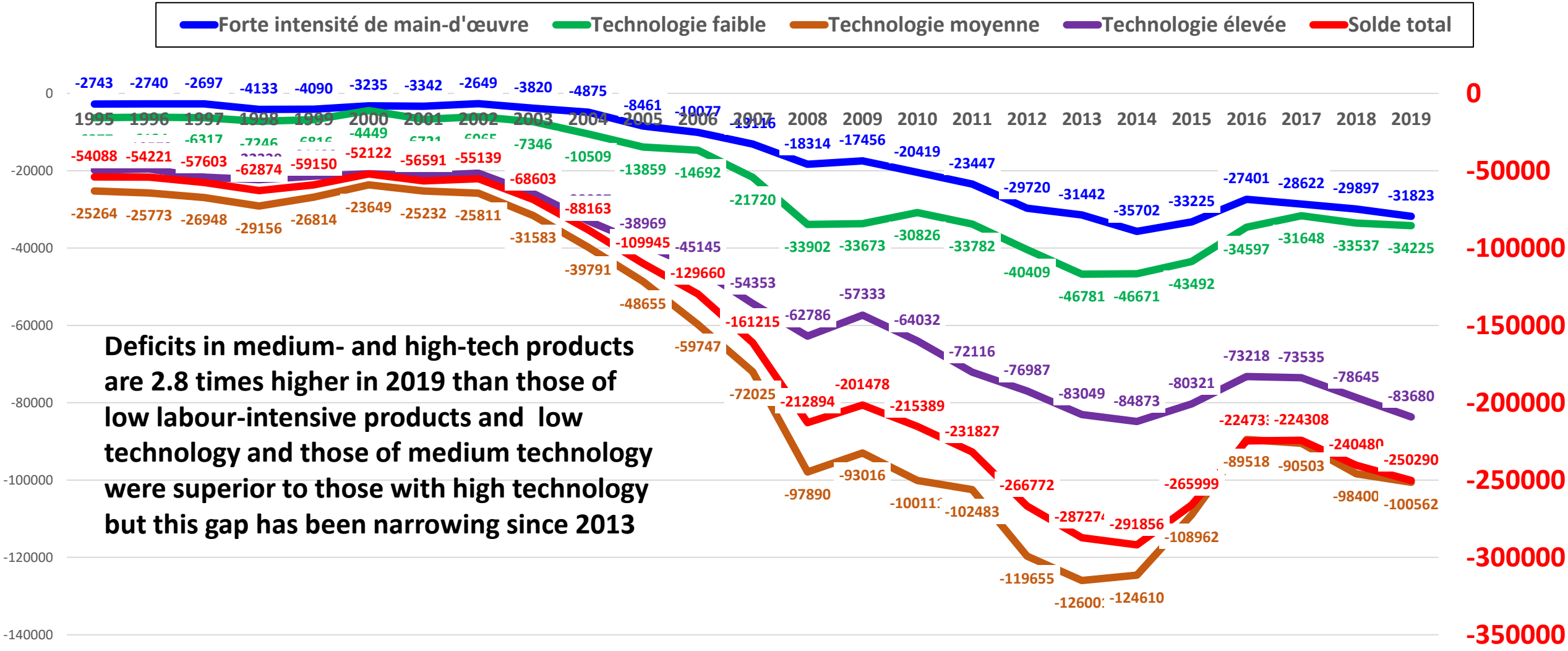


Per capita trade deficit in $ in manufactured products of Africa and SubSaharan Africe from 1995 to 2019



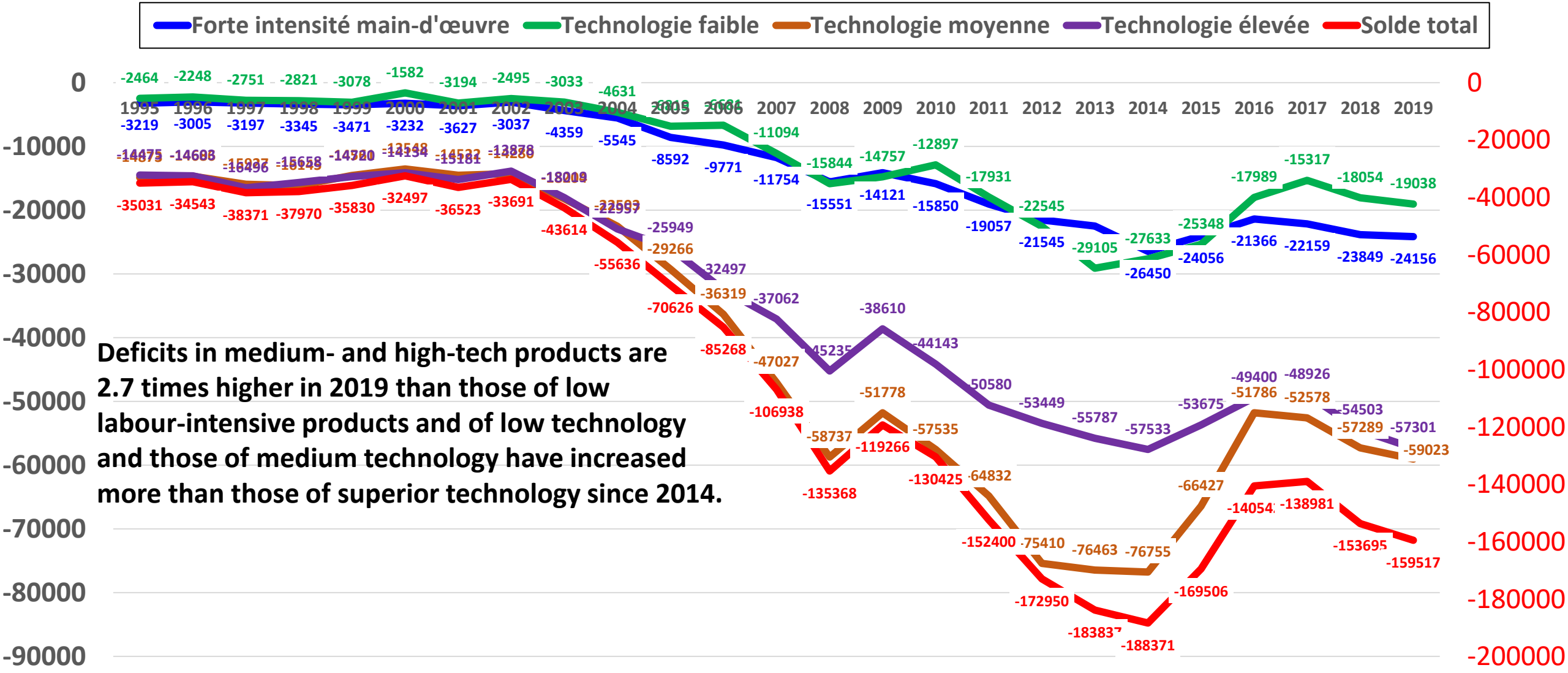
Source: UNCTAD and UN population data base

Increasing deficit of African trade in manufactured products according to their technological level: 1995-2019



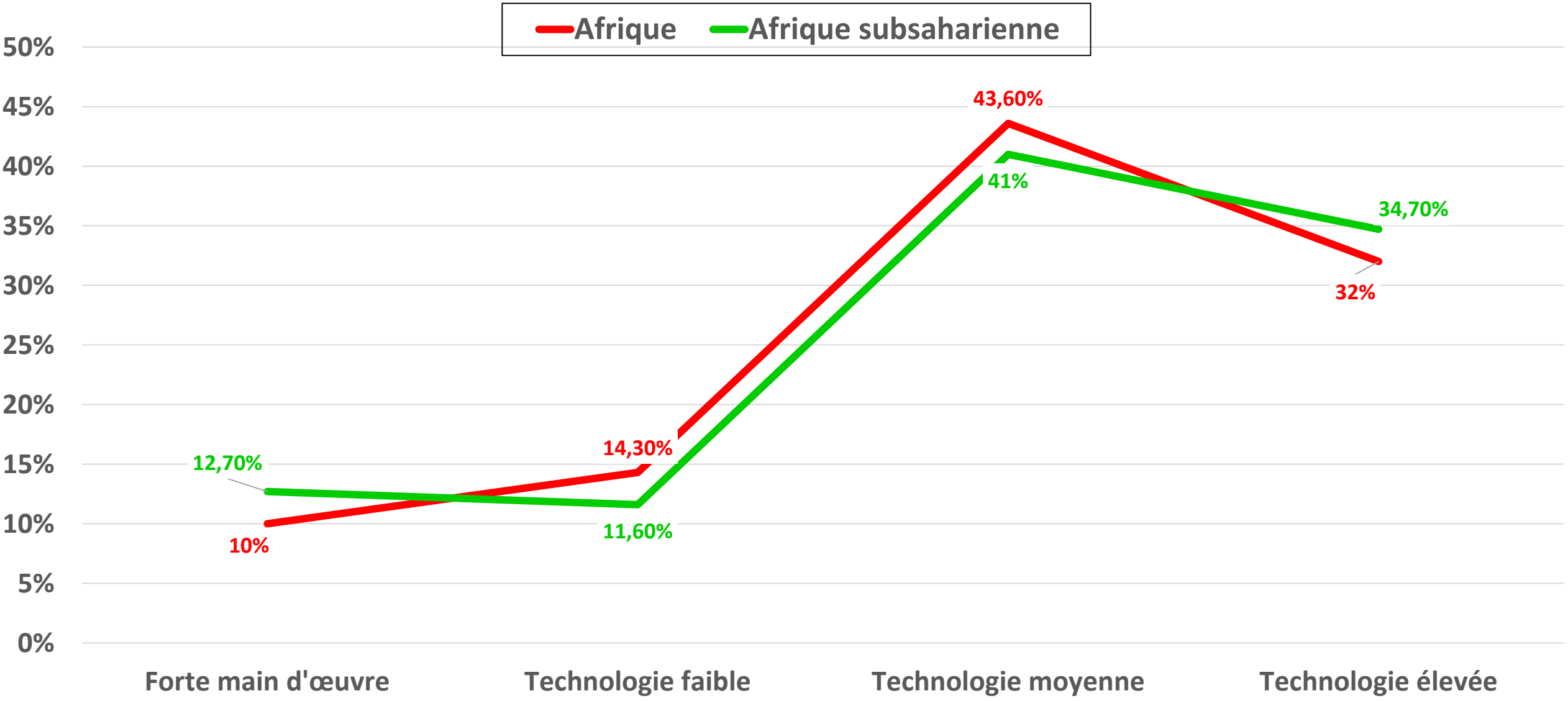
Deficits in medium- and high-tech products are 2.8 times higher in 2019 than those of low labour-intensive products and low technology and those of medium technology were superior to those with high technology but this gap has been narrowing since 2013

Increasing deficit of SSA trade in manufactured products according to their technological level: 1995-2019

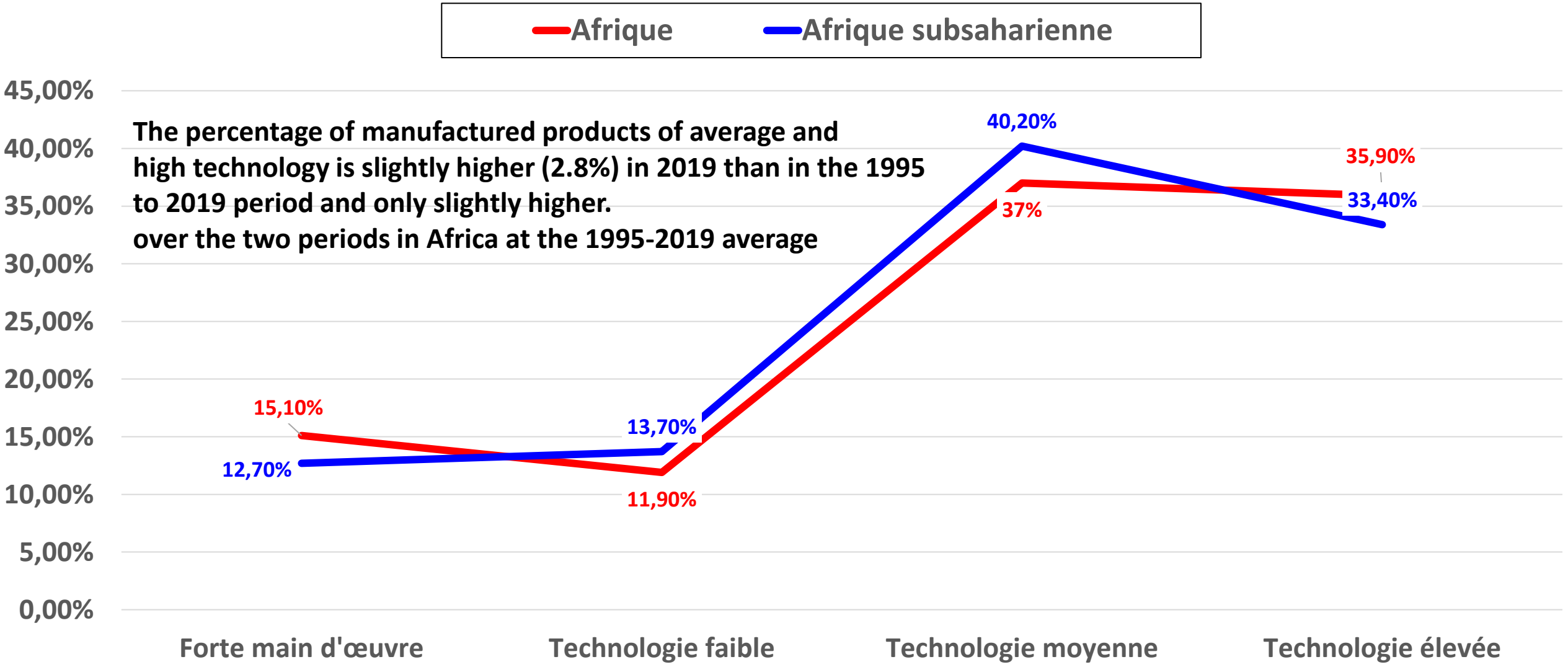


Deficits in medium- and high-tech products are 2.7 times higher in 2019 than those of low labour-intensive products and of low technology and those of medium technology have increased more than those of superior technology since 2014.

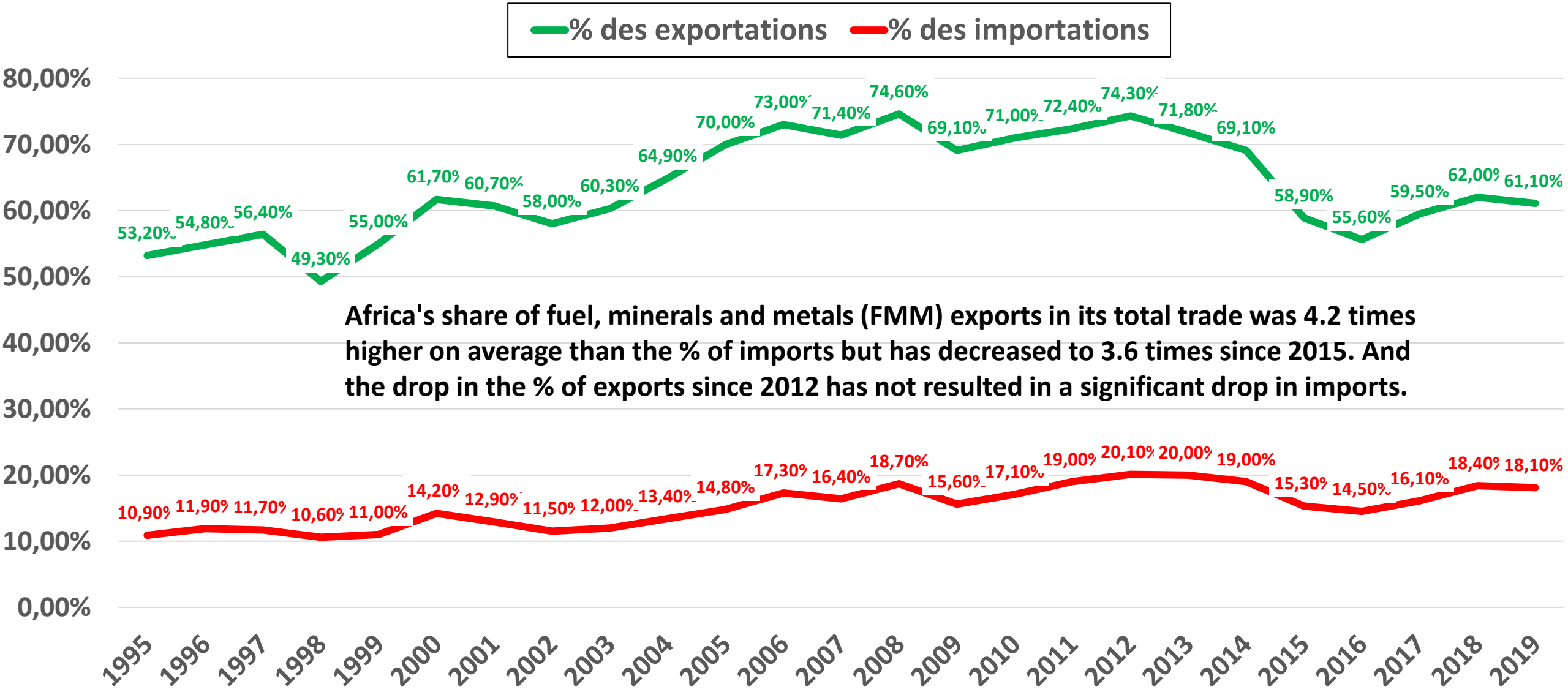
Distribution of trade deficit of Africa and SSA in manufactured products according to their technological level from 1995 to 2019



Distribution of trade deficit of Africa and SSA in manufactured products according to their technological level in 2019

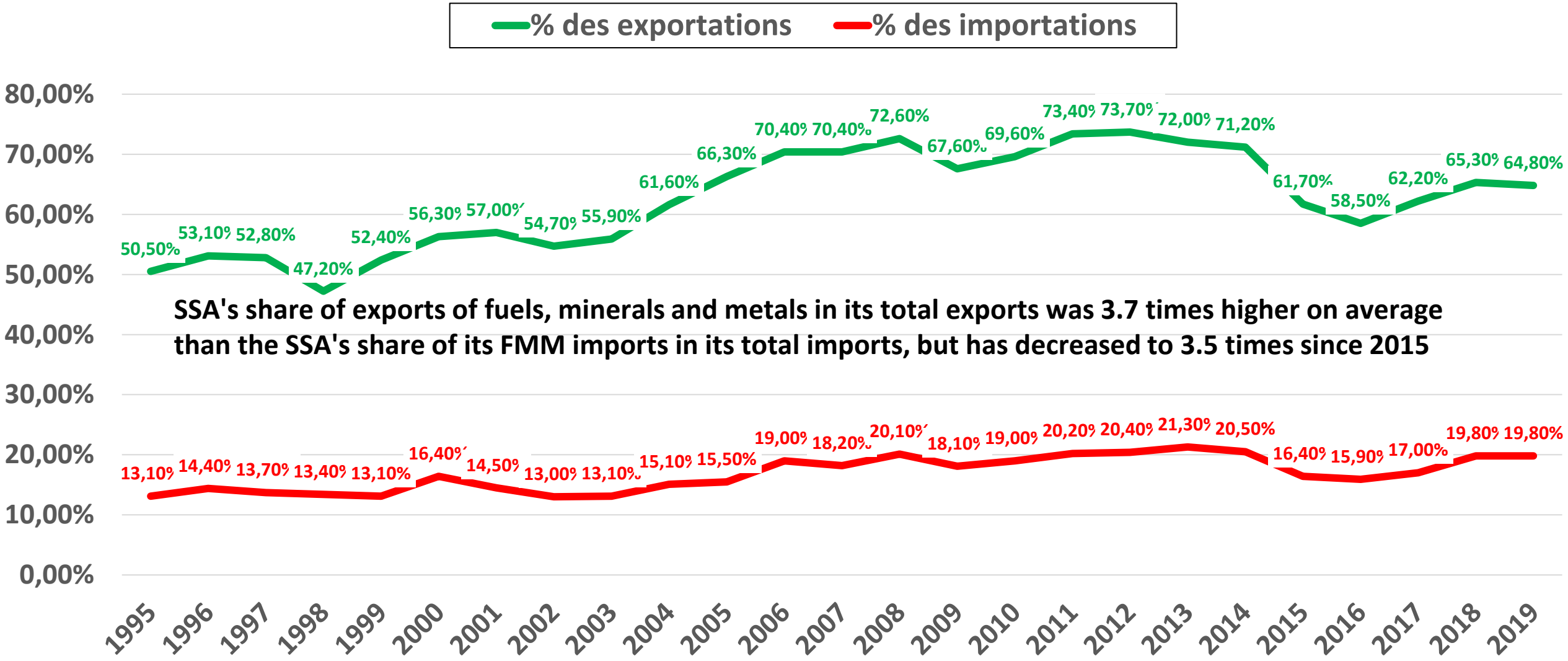


Share of trade in fuels, minerals and metals in Africa total trade from 1995 to 2019



Africa's share of fuel, minerals and metals (FMM) exports in its total trade was 4.2 times higher on average than the % of imports but has decreased to 3.6 times since 2015. And the drop in the % of exports since 2012 has not resulted in a significant drop in imports.

Share of trade in fuels, minerals and metals in SSA total trade from 1995 to 2019



SSA's share of exports of fuels, minerals and metals in its total exports was 3.7 times higher on average than the SSA's share of its FMM imports in its total imports, but has decreased to 3.5 times since 2015

Source : CNUCED

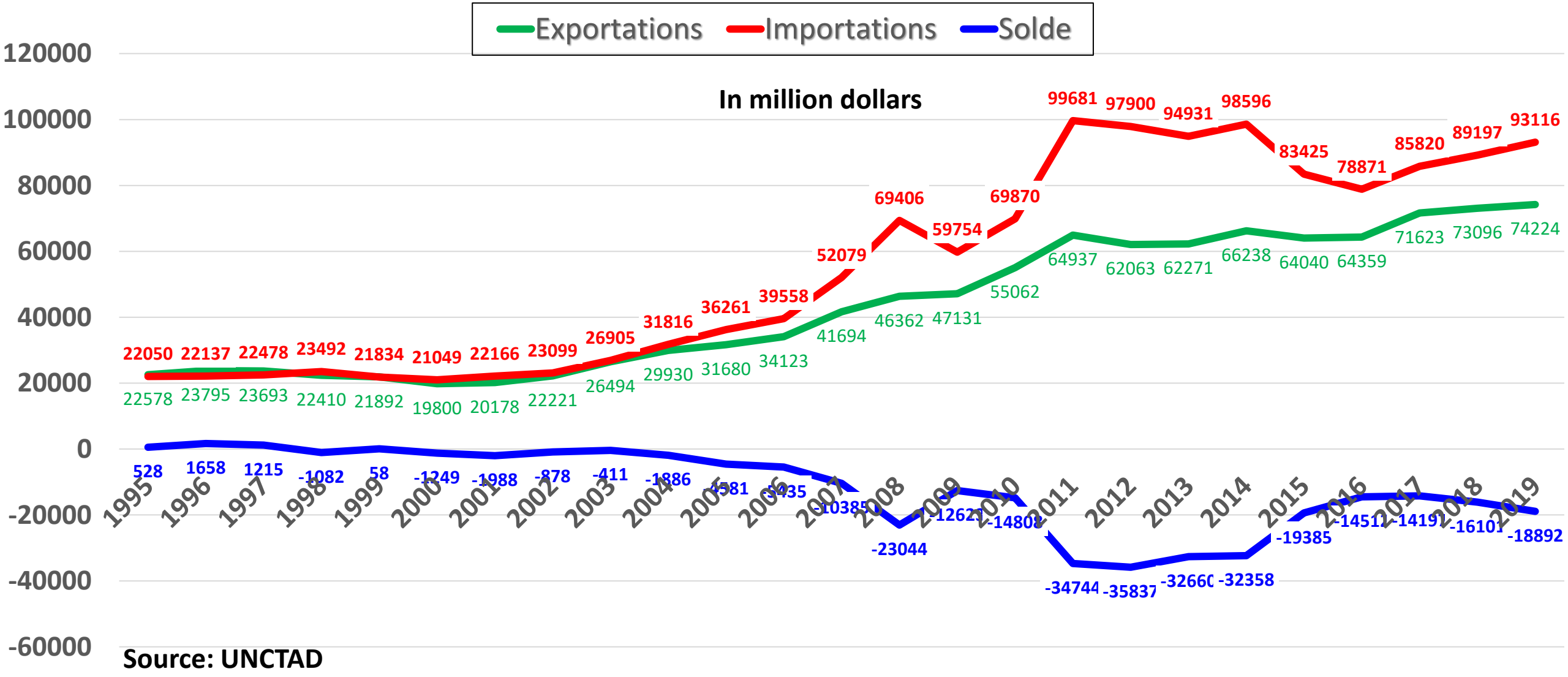
Comments on Africa and SSA trade in agricultural products from 1995 to 2019

Slides 32 to 35 present the annual evolution of agricultural trade – including food products and agricultural raw materials - and slides 36 to 40 detail the evolution of the trade of food products, with or without coffee-cacao-tea-spices.

Relatively balanced from 1995 to 2003, Africa's agricultural trade deficit has increased until 2013 ($35.8 bn), then reduced to $18.9 billion in 2019. The percentage of Its agricultural exports in its total exports has declined significantly since 1995 but has been rising since 2012 when the percentage of agricultural imports has stagnated.

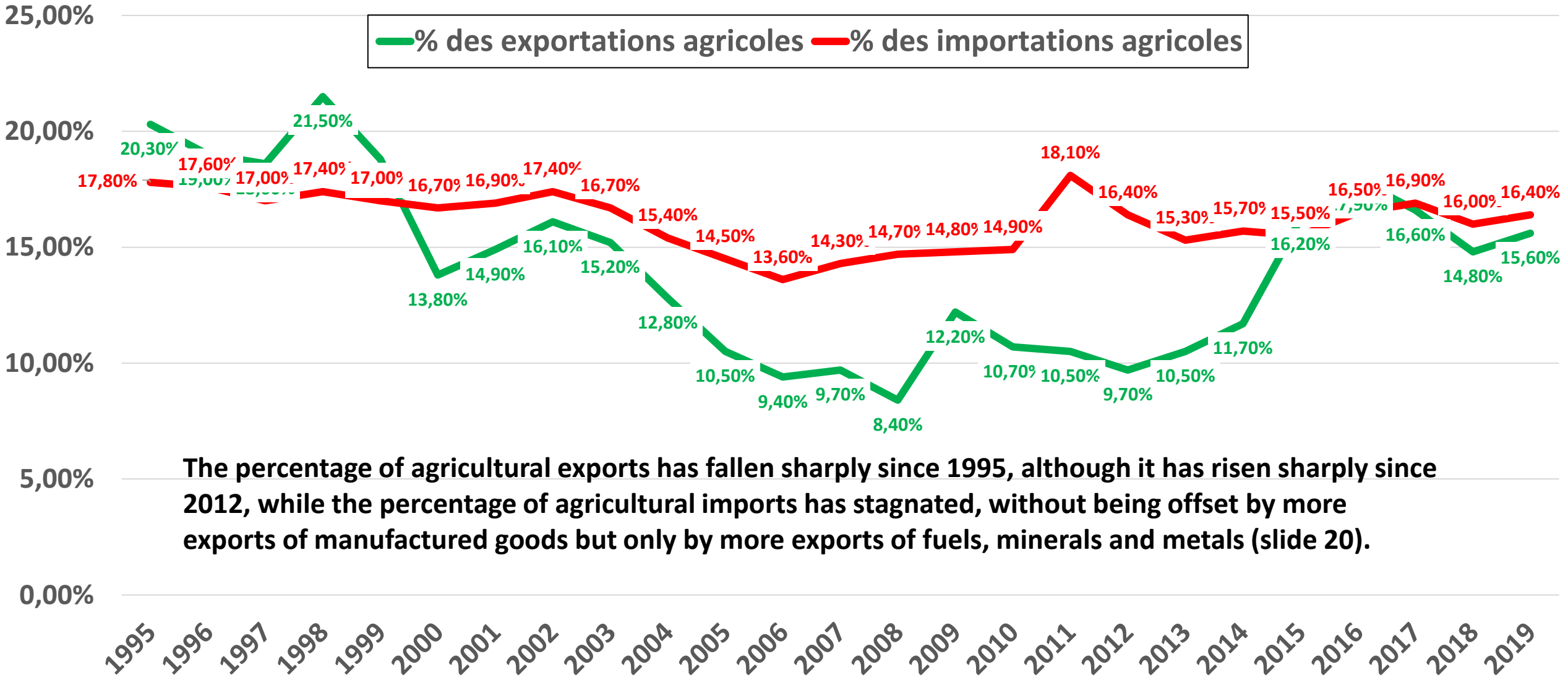
On the other hand, SSA's agricultural trade was in deficit only in 2008 and from 2012 to 2014, with a surplus declining from €7.8 billion in 2017 to €4.4 billion in 2019.

African agricultural trade (in food + agricultural raw materials) from 1995 to 2019



Source: UNCTAD

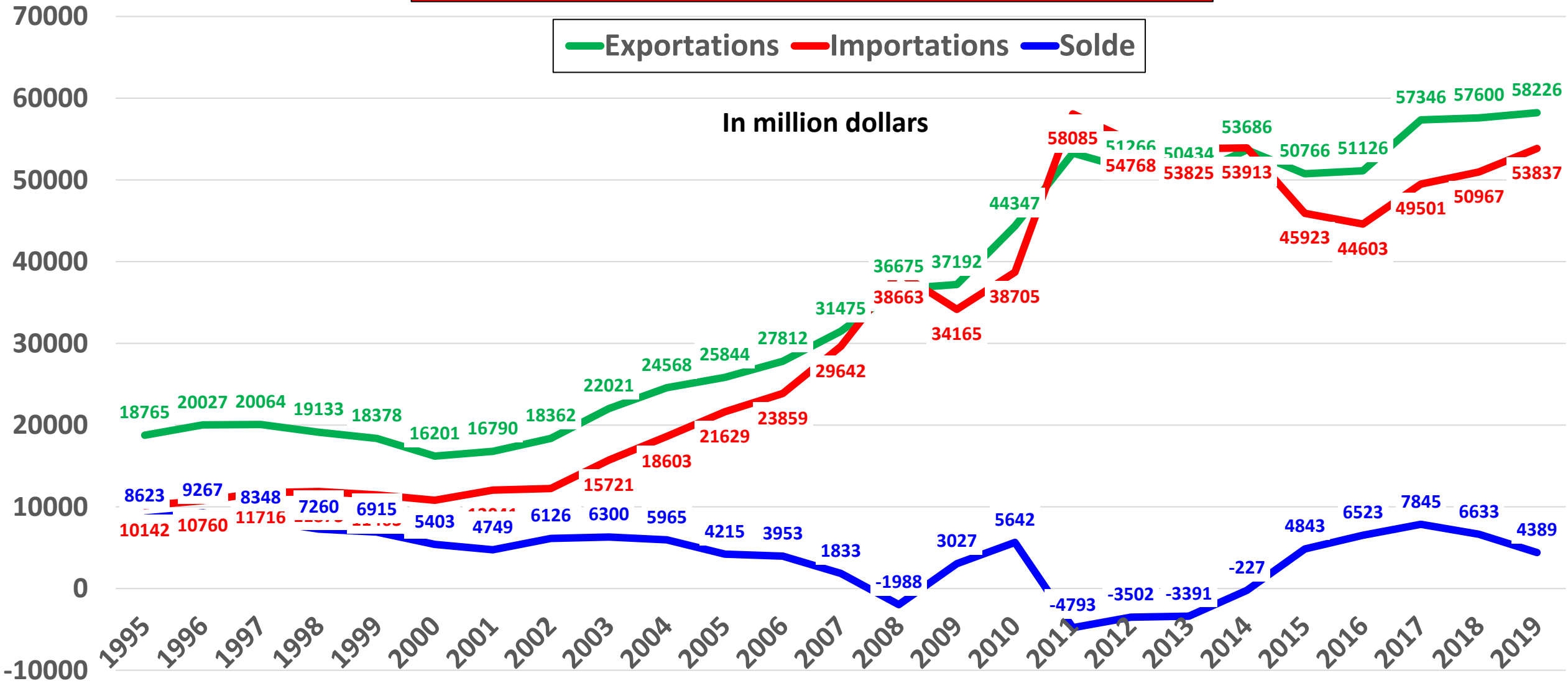
Share of African agricultural trade (food + agricultural raw materials) in African total trade from 1995 à 2019



The percentage of agricultural exports has fallen sharply since 1995, although it has risen sharply since 2012, while the percentage of agricultural imports has stagnated, without being offset by more exports of manufactured goods but only by more exports of fuels, minerals and metals (slide 20).

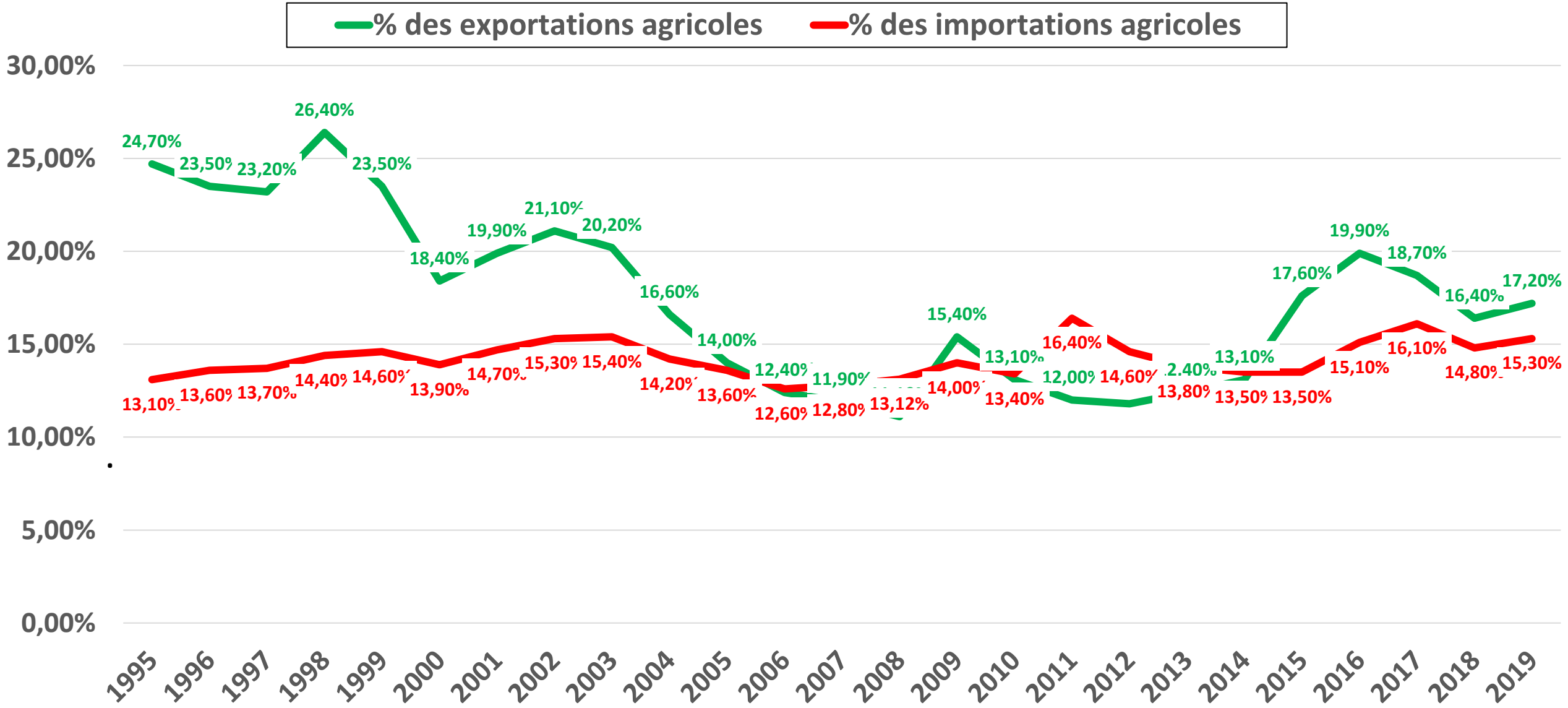
Source : CNUCED

SSA agricultural trade (food + agricultural raw materials) from 1995 to 2019



Source: UNCTAD

Share of SSA agricultural trade (food + agricultural raw materials) in SSA total trade from 1995 à 2019



Source : CNUCED

Comments on food trade of Africa and SSA from 1995 to 2019

Africa's food trade has been consistently in deficit since 1995 (and much earlier) with a maximum of $41 billion in 2014, reduced to $23.6 billion in 2019.

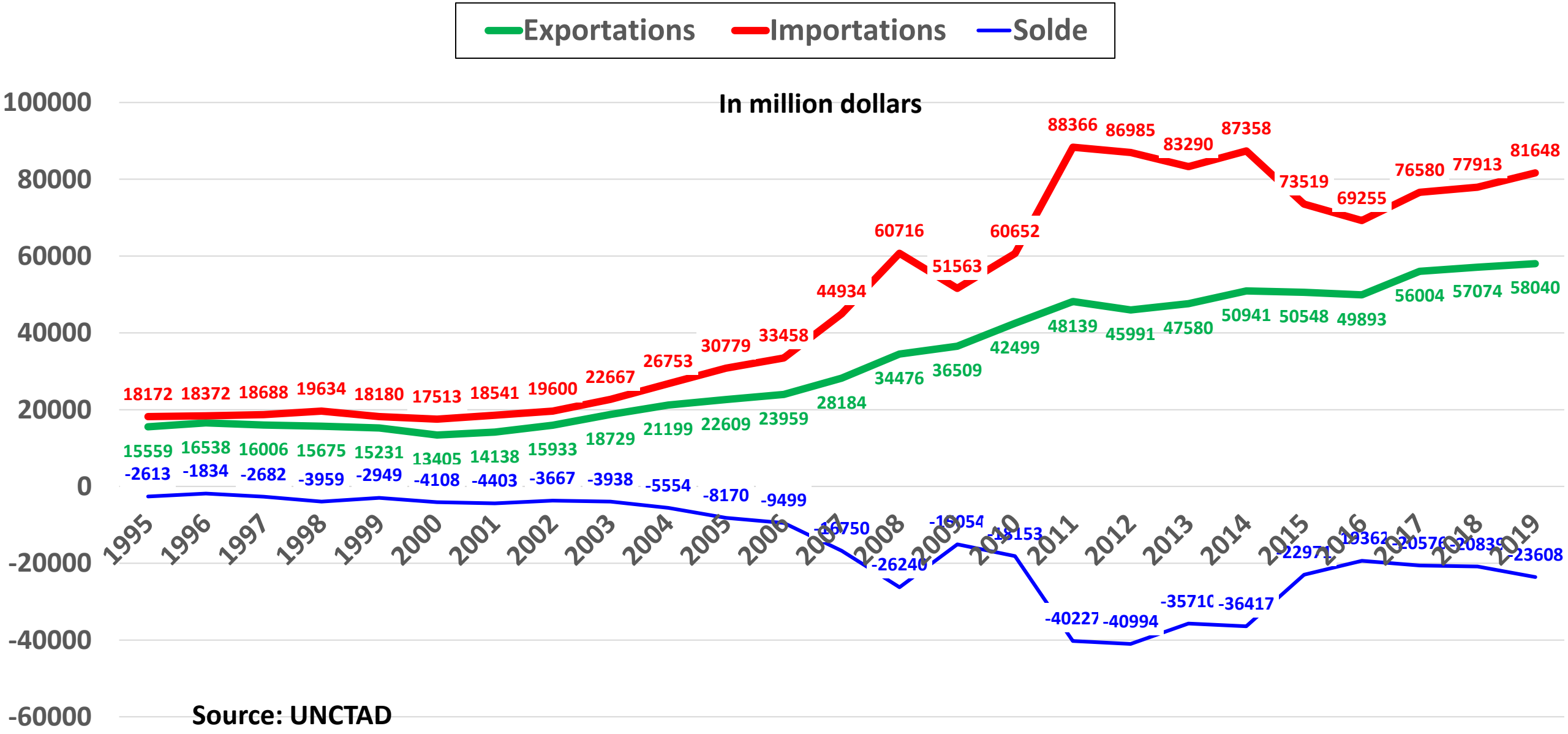
In 2019, Africa's food imports accounted for 87.7% of agricultural imports and food exports 78.2% of agricultural exports.

However, without trade in coffee-cacao-tea-spices (CCTS), which are not basic food staples and which have had little effect on imports, the food deficit of Africa would have reach $112 billion in 2019, 4.7 times more than its agricultural trade deficit.

SSA has been running a food deficit since 2005, with a maximum deficit of 14 billion in 2012, down to $4.8 billion in 2019. But without the CCTS, the deficit would have been at 76.5 billion in 2012 and still at $64.5 billion in 2019.

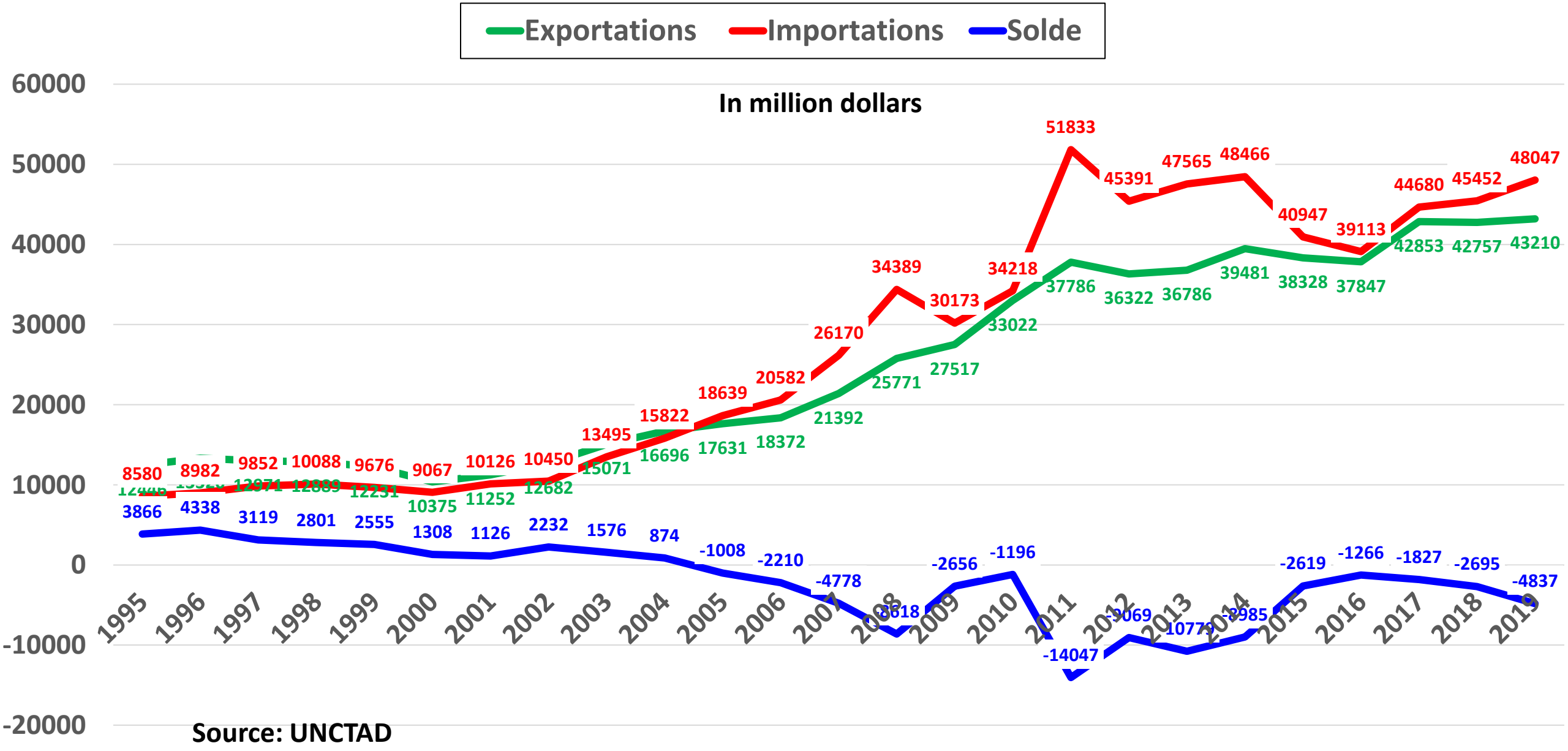
Without CCTS, West Africa would have faced a deficit since 1995 ($1.2 billion) and of 5.9 billion from 1995 to 2019, of which $9.2 billion in 2019. Environmental damage of cocoa and the slavery of Sahelian children on the plantations require a reduction in production.

Africa's food trade from 1995 to 2019



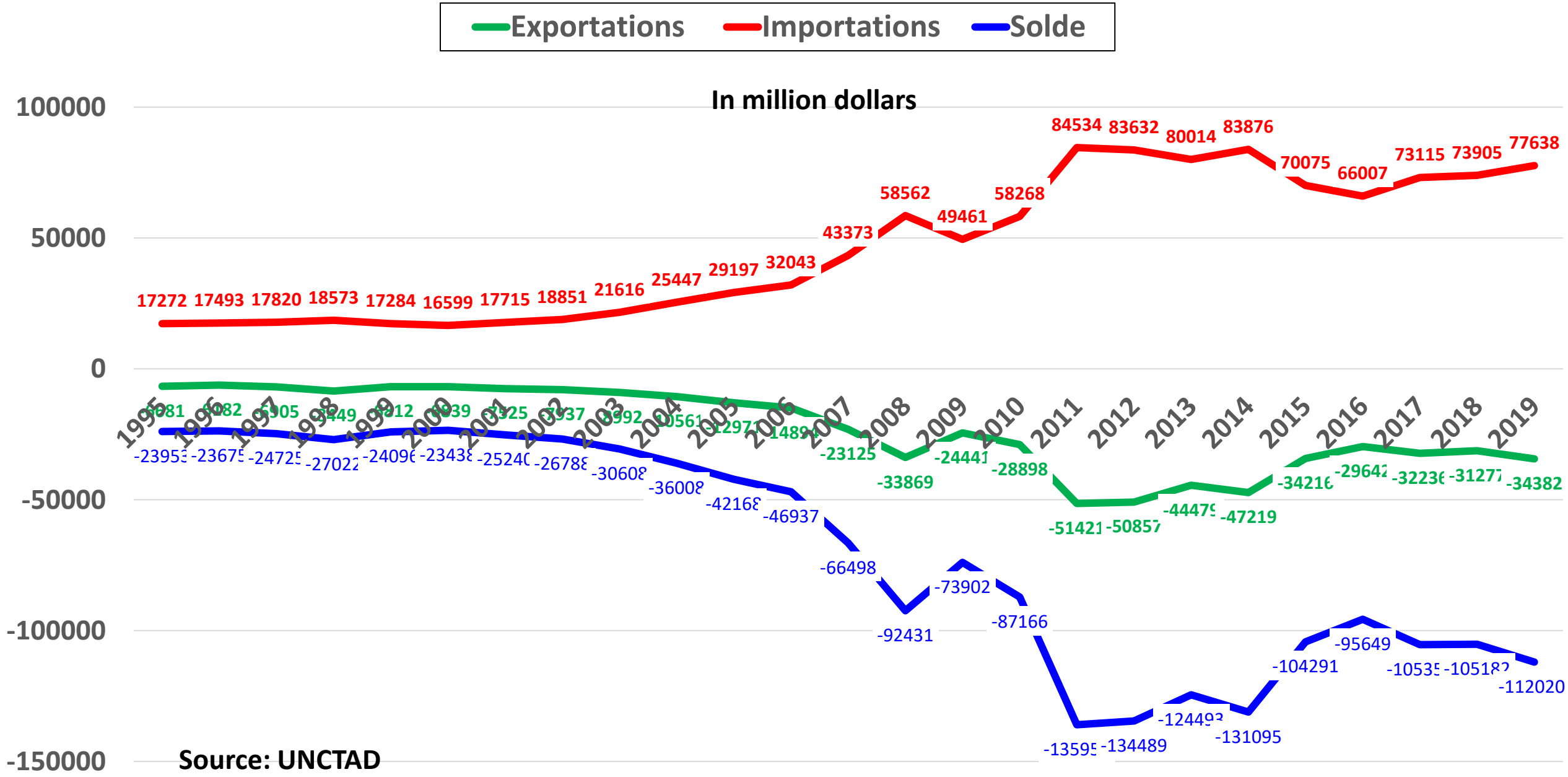
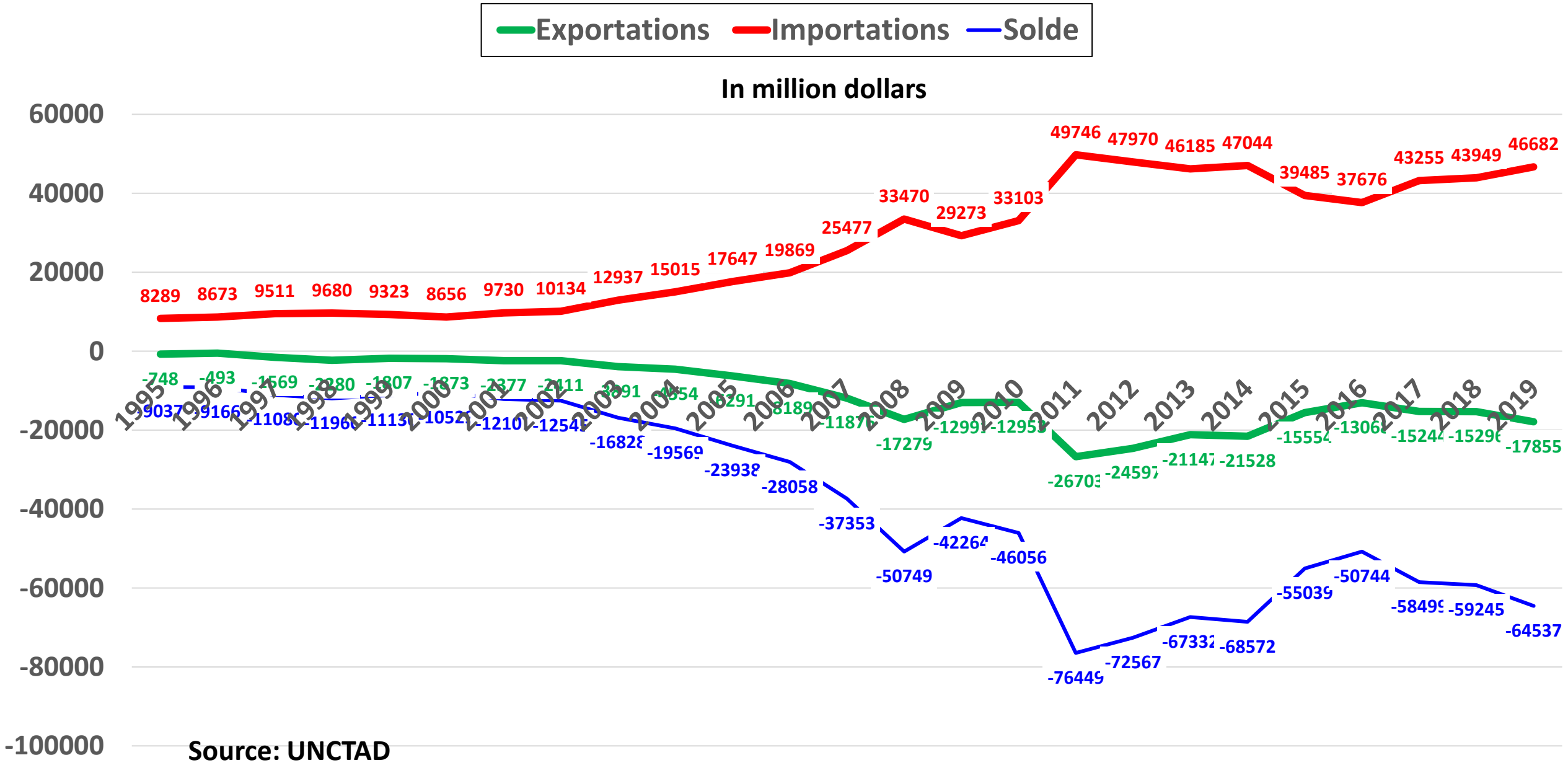
Source: UNCTAD

SubSahara's food trade from 1995 to 2019



Source: UNCTAD

Africa's food trade without coffee-cocoa-tea-spices : 1995-2019



SSA's food trade without coffee-cocoa-tea-spices: 1995-2019