

PRESS RELEASE

Botswana's Imports Fall by 12.9 Percent in June 2026 as Trade Deficit Narrows to P2.3 Billion

GABORONE, August 2026 — Botswana's merchandise imports declined by **12.9 percent** in June 2026, while exports remained virtually unchanged, resulting in a **trade deficit of P2.33 billion**, according to the latest International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) Monthly Digest released by Statistics Botswana.

The statistics show that Botswana imported goods valued at **P7.28 billion** in June 2026, down from a revised **P8.36 billion** in May 2026. The decline was mainly driven by substantial reductions in the value of **diamond and fuel imports**, which fell by 40.0 percent and 21.2 percent, respectively.

Exports, on the other hand, remained broadly stable during the month, increasing marginally from **P4.95 billion in May to P4.95 billion in June 2026**. The June trade deficit stood at **P2.33 billion**.

Fuel and Machinery Lead Imports

Fuel remained Botswana's largest import commodity group in June, accounting for **21.4 percent**, equivalent to **P1.56 billion**, of total imports. Machinery and Electrical Equipment followed at **18.9 percent (P1.38 billion)**, while Food, Beverages and Tobacco accounted for **15.3 percent (P1.12 billion)**.

Diamonds accounted for **13.8 percent (P1.01 billion)** of imports, followed by Chemicals and Rubber Products at **10.2 percent (P740.8 million)**.

Among individual commodities, **distillate fuel** was the leading import, valued at **P728.3 million**, followed by petrol at **P546.3 million** and other static converters at **P305.7 million**.

Diamonds and Copper Dominate Exports

Diamonds continued to dominate Botswana's exports in June 2026, accounting for **56.1 percent**, valued at **P2.78 billion**, of total exports. Copper was the second-largest export commodity, contributing **26.9 percent (P1.33 billion)**, while Machinery and Electrical Equipment accounted for **6.2 percent (P304.6 million)**.

Among the top 50 exported commodities excluding diamonds, **copper ores and concentrates** were the leading export, accounting for **61.2 percent (P1.33**

billion) of non-diamond exports. Ignition wiring sets and other wiring sets followed with **P152.6 million**, while disodium carbonate contributed **P85.7 million**.

South Africa Remains Botswana's Major Import Source

The **Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** remained Botswana's dominant source of imports, supplying goods worth **P5.13 billion**, or **70.4 percent** of total imports in June.

At country level, **South Africa** remained Botswana's largest import source, accounting for **58.3 percent (P4.24 billion)** of total imports, followed by **Namibia at 11.7 percent (P853.4 million)**.

Asia supplied **14.5 percent** of Botswana's imports, while the European Union accounted for **6.8 percent**.

Asia Remains Botswana's Leading Export Market

Asia continued to be Botswana's largest export destination, absorbing **56.7 percent (P2.81 billion)** of total exports in June 2026. Diamonds and copper were the principal commodities exported to the region.

The **United Arab Emirates** was Botswana's leading individual export destination, receiving **24.6 percent (P1.22 billion)** of total exports, followed by **China at 14.9 percent (P737.6 million)** and **South Africa at 13.1 percent (P646.7 million)**. India, Belgium and Australia also recorded significant shares of Botswana's exports.

Road Transport Dominates Imports

Road transport remained the principal mode through which goods entered Botswana during June 2026, accounting for **74.9 percent (P5.45 billion)** of total imports. Air transport accounted for **15.9 percent (P1.15 billion)**, while rail contributed **9.2 percent (P672.2 million)**.

For exports, however, **air transport was the dominant mode**, carrying **57.2 percent (P2.83 billion)** of total exports. Road transport accounted for **41.9 percent (P2.07 billion)**, while rail accounted for **0.9 percent (P48.1 million)**.

Botswana Records P26.8 Billion in Transit Trade

The country recorded substantial transit trade during the month, with goods valued at **P26.84 billion** transiting through Botswana to various destinations.

Martins Drift processed the largest share of transit goods at **44.9 percent (P12.05 billion)**, followed by **Kazungula Bridge at 29.8 percent (P8.00 billion)** and **Tlokweng Gate at 9.5 percent (P2.55 billion)**.

Copper and articles thereof constituted the largest category of goods in transit, accounting for **42.0 percent (P11.28 billion)**, followed by inorganic chemicals at **15.1 percent (P4.05 billion)** and machinery and mechanical appliances at **8.2 percent (P2.21 billion)**.

Data Revisions

Statistics Botswana notes that monthly trade statistics are preliminary and subject to revision as additional information becomes available, particularly from delayed customs duty assessments and customs processing.

The May 2026 figures were revised upwards, with imports increasing by **P292.5 million (3.6 percent)** to P8.36 billion, while total exports increased by **P134.0 million (2.8 percent)** to P4.95 billion.

About International Merchandise Trade Statistics

International Merchandise Trade Statistics measure the flow of goods across Botswana's borders and provide important information for monitoring economic performance, identifying trade opportunities, assessing competitiveness and informing policy and trade negotiations. The statistics are also used in the compilation of national accounts and balance of payments.

The International Merchandise Trade Statistics Monthly Digest – June 2026 is available from [Statistics Botswana website](https://www.statsbots.org.bw/publication-by-sector/2778):

<https://www.statsbots.org.bw/publication-by-sector/2778>

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