



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

21 JANUARY 2026

Weekly Global Economic Report

MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Trade and economic updates

Global

Global Trade Hit Record USD 35 Trillion in 2025, But Momentum Is Weakening

According to a year-end update from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global trade in goods and services is poised to surpass **USD 35 trillion for the first time in 2025**. Growth has been driven by expanding East Asia and South-South trade, with electronics and other manufactured goods leading the rise. However, UNCTAD says that softer prices and geopolitical headwinds suggest that trade momentum will slow in 2026, with lower volumes expected for traditional commodities and services. [Read more here](#).

IMF Raises Global Growth Forecast for 2026 Amid AI Investment Boost

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) global growth outlook for 2026 has increased from earlier forecasts to 3.3%, driven by strong investment in artificial intelligence infrastructure easing US tariff pressures, and the effects of new trade agreements. However, IMF officials cautioned that overreliance on AI-driven gains could pose inflation risks if productivity expectations are not met. [Read more here](#).

Asian Development Bank Reports That Trade Finance Gap Remains at USD 2.5 Trillion

The Asian Development Bank reports that the global trade finance gap, the difference between demand and available financing for trade, stayed at an elevated **USD 2.5 trillion in 2025**, unchanged from 2023 levels. The persistent shortfall is squeezing small and medium enterprises and slowing cross-border commerce, as rising trade costs and tariff uncertainty discourage banks from extending credit. Fintech solutions and local currency usage are emerging as partial mitigants, but experts warn more policy support is needed to unlock global commerce. [Read more here](#).

North Asia

China Reports Record USD 1.2 Trillion Trade Surplus in 2025

China ended 2025 with an annual trade surplus of **about USD 1.2 trillion**, despite a roughly 20% drop in exports to the United States after renewed tariffs. Exports grew to

other regions including Africa (up 26%), Southeast Asia (13%), and the European Union (8%), highlighting Beijing's ability to pivot markets. Electronics and auto shipments drove much of the trade growth, although some commentators are observing China's heavy export dependence and expecting it to place more emphasis on consumer driven growth in the future. [Read more here.](#)

Americas

US Tariff Revenue Falls Nearly USD 3 Billion in December, Reflecting Trade Shifts

US Treasury data shows that tariff revenue collected in December 2025 fell by almost USD 3 billion compared with November, as some tariff exclusions expired and trade flows subsequently shifted. Although tariffs have been a key tool in US trade policy, the decline in revenue suggests adjustments in trading patterns, import volumes, and company behaviour as global partners adapt. The pattern highlights the dynamic effects of trade policy on fiscal outcomes and supply chains. [Read more here.](#)

Southeast Asia

India and United Arab Emirates Agree to Boost Trade Ties

India and the United Arab Emirates agreed to deepen their trade and strategic relationship during high-level talks in New Delhi, setting a goal to double bilateral trade to **USD 200 billion by 2032**. Agreements span energy, defence, food, technology, and investment, including a landmark deal for India to import **0.5 million metric tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually** starting in 2028. [Read more here.](#)

External links

The following links may provide useful information to businesses:

- [NZTE's website](#) and [myNZTE](#) provide a range of insights and tools available to support New Zealand exporters.
- The Treasury releases a [weekly economic update](#) every Friday. Stats NZ has published a [data portal](#) with near real-time economic indicators.
- MBIE publishes a [sector reports series](#) which provides regularly updated reports on all industry sectors that make up the New Zealand economy. These include official economic data and the challenges and opportunities that face New Zealand's industry sectors.
- [Business.govt.nz](#) provides tools and advice from across government to save small businesses' time and help make the business a success.
- MFAT has created a [tariff finder](#) which is designed to help goods exporters and importers maximise benefits from New Zealand's Free Trade Agreements and compare tariffs in 136 other markets.
- The all of government [Trade Barriers](#) website can be used to register any trade barriers experienced or issues exporting to an offshore market. Queries can be sent via the website or through the MFAT Exporter Helpline 0800 824 605. Enquiries will be sent to the government agency best placed to answer.
- Tatauranga Aotearoa Stats NZ provides official data on the value of New Zealand's exports and imports of both goods and services, by commodity type via the [New Zealand Trade Dashboard](#). This interactive dashboard is updated every quarter and allows for filtering by country and by commodity type.

More info

More reports

View full list of market reports from MFAT at www.mfat.govt.nz/market-reports

If you would like to request a topic for reporting please email exports@mfat.net

To get email alerts when new reports are published, go to our [subscription page](#).

To learn more about exporting to this market, New Zealand Trade & Enterprise's comprehensive [market guides](#) cover export regulations, business culture, market-entry strategies and more.

To contact the Export Helpdesk

email exports@mfat.net

call 0800 824 605

visit Tradebarriers.govt.nz

Disclaimer

This information released in this report aligns with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

The opinions and analysis expressed in this report are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views or official policy position of the New Zealand Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand Government take no responsibility for the accuracy of this report.

Copyright

Crown copyright ©. Website copyright statement is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](#). In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms.