

New report says African countries must tap global markets more effectively if they are to strengthen their economies

*African countries could take a big step forward economically by participating more effectively in the global production of goods and services. That's according to the latest **African Economic Outlook**, a report produced annually by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the OECD Development Centre and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).*

While Africa's exports to the rest of the world grew faster than those of any other region in 2012, it was dominated by primary commodities which accounted for only 3.5% of world merchandise. The report argues that this trend could be reversed by more effective involvement in regional and global value chains – the range of activities in different countries that bring a product from conception to delivery to the consumer – that could serve as a springboard for Africa in economic diversification, domestic resource mobilisation and investments in critical infrastructure. In order to do so, however, the continent needs to avoid getting stuck in low value-added activities.

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