Uganda is a member of the East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The EAC is a customs union with duty-free intra-EAC trade and a common external tariff (CET). The EAC member states also adopted a Common Market Protocol in 2009, which came into effect in 2010. However, the Protocol has not yet been fully implemented.

COMESA has 21 member states, of which 10 are part of the COMESA FTA - eSwatini has preferential access under a derogation but is exempt from reciprocating preferences due to its membership of SACU. The DRC, Ethiopia, Egypt, Somalia and Tunisia are in the process of joining the FTA.

The IGAD members are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. IGAD focuses on policy and programme harmonisation, peace and security, food security and sustainable development, facilitating investment, capacity building and infrastructure development. There has been no intra-IGAD tariff liberalisation.

30% of total trade is intra-Africa

Intra-Africa exports: 52% of world exports
- Kenya (36%)
- Sudan (26%)
- Rwanda (13%)
- DRC (13%)

Intra-Africa imports: 21% of world imports
- Kenya (37%)
- South Africa (22%)
- Tanzania (19%)
- Egypt (8%)

Main intra-Africa export products
- Sugar in solid form
- Petroleum oils (excluding crude)
- Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width >= 600 mm
- Hot-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width >= 600 mm
- Semi-manufactured gold

3% of intra-Africa exports are to countries outside the EAC and COMESA

Main destination markets
- Morocco (40%)
- South Africa (21%)
- Ghana (8%)
- Algeria (7%)
- Nigeria (6%)
- Other (18%)

Main export products
- Coffee (54%)
- Light oils and preparations (7%)
- Stripped tobacco (5%)
- Water pipe tobacco (4%)
- Chest freezers; capacity <= 800 litre (2%)
- Other (27%)
Intra-Africa tariffs

Goods imported from other EAC countries and the majority of COMESA member states enter duty-free. The exceptions are goods imported from the DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, eSwatini, Somalia and Tunisia. The DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Tunisia are all in the process of acceding to the COMESA FTA. Imports from the DRC, Somalia and Tunisia are currently levied MFN applied tariffs until tariff phase-down by these countries under COMESA has taken place. The preferential import tariff for goods from Eritrea varies between 2% and 12%; up to 20% of the EAC CET. Products imported from Ethiopia are levied preferential tariffs of 9%, 18%, 22.5%, 31.5%, 45% and 54%; up to 90% of the EAC CET.

Main source markets

- South Africa (76%)
- Mali (13%)
- Burkina Faso (4%)
- Mozambique (2%)
- Gabon (2%)
- Other (2%)

Main import products

- Semi-manufactured gold (23%)
- Flat-rolled iron coils of a width of >= 600 mm (18%)
- Goods vehicles with compression-ignition (6%)
- Hot-rolled irregular coil iron bars and rods (6%)
- Refined sugar (5%)
- Other (44%)

African imports from outside the EAC and COMESA are levied MFN applied duties (EAC CET)

Of the top 20 import products 14 tariff lines are duty-free. However, whether imports of certain goods and passenger vehicles are duty-free depends on whether the vehicles are unassembled. Other duty-free imports include flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, electricity supply meters, cement additives and non-agglomerated coal. 10% import duties are applicable to mixtures of odoriferous substances (an additive used in the beverage industry) and acrylic polymers in primary form. Imports of semi-manufactured gold, assembled vehicles, uncoated paper and fresh apples are levied 25% import duties. Refined sugar for industrial use is levied a 20% import duty and refined sugar not for industrial use a tariff of either 100% or US$460/MT whichever is higher.

Highest MFN applied duties

- Not concentrated sweetened and unsweetened milk and cream; yoghurt and buttermilk; grated, powdered and processed cheese; blue-veined cheese and other cheeses (60%)
- Wheat and corn flour, woven fabrics, women’s and girls’ tracksuits and cotton bed linen (50%)
- Cigars, water pipe tobacco, second-hand clothes and primary cells and batteries (35%)
- Apples (25%)
- Uncoated paper (25%)
- Assembled vehicles (25%)
- Semi-manufactured gold (25%)
- Refined sugar for industrial use (20%) and not for industrial use (100% or US$460/MT whichever is higher)
- Rice (75% or US$345/MT whichever is higher)

Lowest MFN applied duties

- Mixtures of odoriferous substances (10%)
- Acrylic polymers, in primary forms (10%)
- Sunflower seeds (10%)
- Unassembled vehicles (duty-free)
- Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel (duty-free)
- Medicaments (duty-free)
- Non-agglomerated coal (duty-free)
- Instruments and appliances used in medical, surgical or veterinary sciences, n.e.s. (duty-free)
- Barley seed for sowing (duty-free)

Sources: ITC TradeMap (2019); ITC MacMap (2019); WTO Tariff Database (2019) and tralac calculations