**Media Releases 2009**

**South African Trade Statistics for January 2009**

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**Pretoria, 27 February 2009 --** The South African Revenue Service (SARS) today releases trade statistics for January 2009 that record a trade deficit of R17.4 billion.

SARS and the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) have agreed on a methodology on the calculation and publication of the trade statistics with regards to the temporary importation of gold. For the sake of clarity SARS and the SARB have agreed to publish trade data without temporary imported gold being reflected.

Monthly trade data will separately indicate the value of temporary gold imports.

The amount of gold temporarily imported into South Africa amounted to R4.6 billion. This amount has not been included in the import or export numbers for the purposes of calculating the trade balance for January 2009.

The R17.4 billion deficit for January 2009 was mainly due to a month-on-month reduced exports of mineral products, precious metals and stones; machinery, base metals, vehicles and aircraft, and a month-on-month increase in imports of mineral products, original equipment components for vehicles and textiles and textile articles. The deficit in January 2008 amounted to R10.2 billion.

Imports increased by R4.1 billion (8.2%) on January 2008 and exports decreased by R3.1 billion (7.9%) on January 2008

Exports for January 2009 of R36.25 billion and imports of R53.63 billion resulted in a deficit of R17.4 billion. Imports increased by R3.45 billion (6.88%) to R53.63 billion and exports decreased by R12.3 billion (25.32%) to R36.25 billion. Highlights include a month-on-month decrease in exports of machinery and electrical appliances, base metals and articles thereof, vehicles, precious and semi precious stones and metals and mineral products, and a month-on-month increase in imports of mineral products, motor vehicle parts and machinery and electrical appliances.
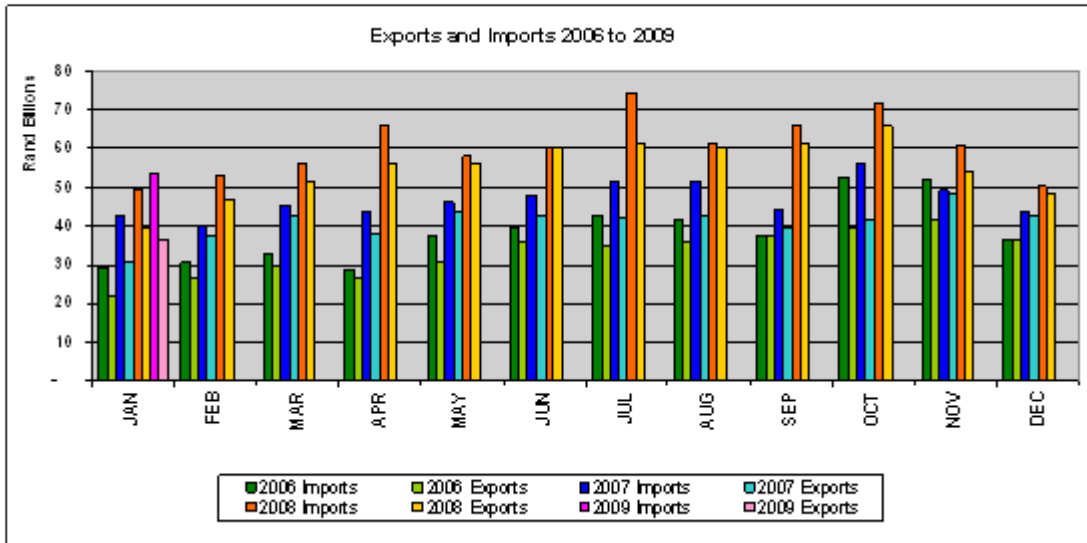
**Trade Highlights by Category**

- The December to January change (up by 6.88%) in imports of goods reflected increases mainly in machinery and mechanical appliances [up by R548 million (3%)], mineral products [up by R1.8 billion (17%)] and original equipment components [up by R1.1 billion (58%)] (16%). The December to January change in exports of goods reflected a decrease in vehicles [down by R2.9 billion (52%) and machinery and electrical appliances [down by R1.6 billion (38%)]; and a decrease in exports of precious metals and stones [down by R3.5 billion (31%)].
- Month-on-month exports decreased particularly as a result of decreased values of trade in goods such as iron ores, coal, aircraft engine parts, filter apparatus, motor vehicles and platinum.
- The month-on-month increase in imports is the result of increased values of trade in goods such as mineral oils and fuels; clothing and fabrics.
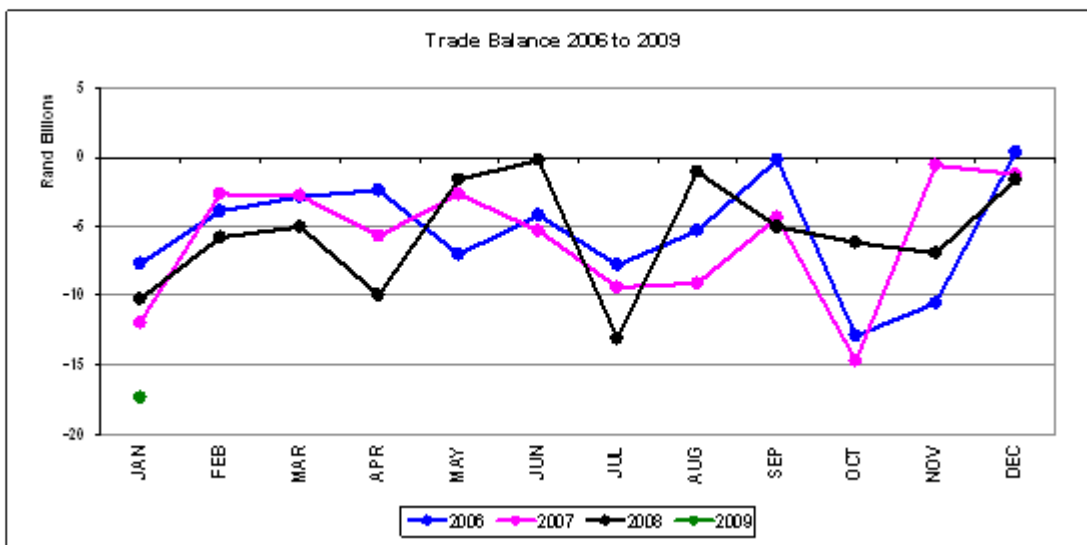
**Trade Highlights by World Zone .**

- The surpluses and deficits for January 2009 as given below for the world zones are in respect of unaudited figures, and those for December 2008 are audited.
  The trade deficit with Asia decreased from R7 billion in December to R12.8 billion in January 2009. Exports to Asia decreased by R2.2 billion to R11.3 billion and imports increased by R3.5 billion to R24.2 billion.
- The trade deficit with Europe increased from R1.1 billion in December to R6.2 billion in January 2009. Exports decreased by R3.5 billion to R11.2 billion and imports increased by R1.6 billion to R17.4 billion.
- The trade surplus with America increased from R3.2 billion in December to R4.3 billion in January 2009. Exports decreased from R5.0 billion to R3.3 billion and imports decreased from R8.2 billion to R7.6 billion.
- The trade surplus with Africa increased from R5 billion to R3.9 billion. Imports decreased from R4 billion to R2.7 and exports decreased from R9.0 billion to R6.6 in January.

**Trade for the year**



Exports and Imports 2006 to 2009

The trade deficit for January 2009 is R17.4 billion versus a deficit of R10.2 billion (audited) for the same month in 2008. The trade deficit for January 2007 was R11.9 and R7.7 billion for the same month in 2006.



Trade Balance 2006 to 2009

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