

# South Africa urged to speed up fruit export diversification



The necessity for market diversification in South African exports, notably in the fruit sector, remains critical despite a temporary 90-day reprieve announced by U.S. President Donald Trump. This announcement followed a series of reciprocal tariffs affecting approximately 75 countries, including South Africa.

Wandile Sihlobo, chief economist for the Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz), emphasized the urgency of diversifying agricultural exports in light of the new U.S. tariffs. Sihlobo stated, "South Africa cannot keep moving at a pedestrian pace on trade matters during heightened geoeconomic tension." He highlighted the need for increased energy and urgency from the government.

South Africa's involvement in BRICS, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, and China, is particularly relevant given current trade dynamics. The BRICS group has expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE, Indonesia, and Iran. The latter's inclusion has been a point of contention with the U.S., impacting South Africa's relations due to its growing ties with Tehran.

Sihlobo advised the South African government to focus on reducing import tariffs and phytosanitary barriers in countries like China, India, and Saudi Arabia, particularly for fruit exports. He also stressed the importance of maintaining access to existing markets.

Additionally, Sihlobo suggested re-evaluating the marketing strategy for agricultural exports. He proposed that presenting products collectively under the 'South Africa Inc' approach could be advantageous.

Source: [Freight News](#)

Publication date: Fri 11 Apr 2025