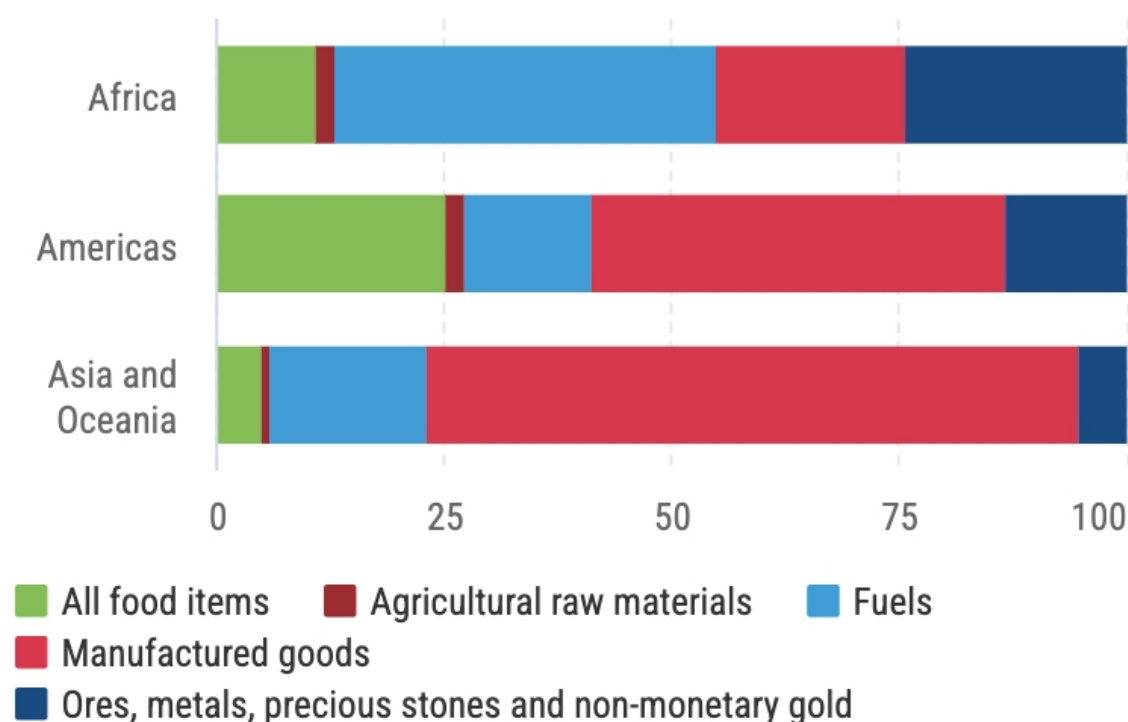


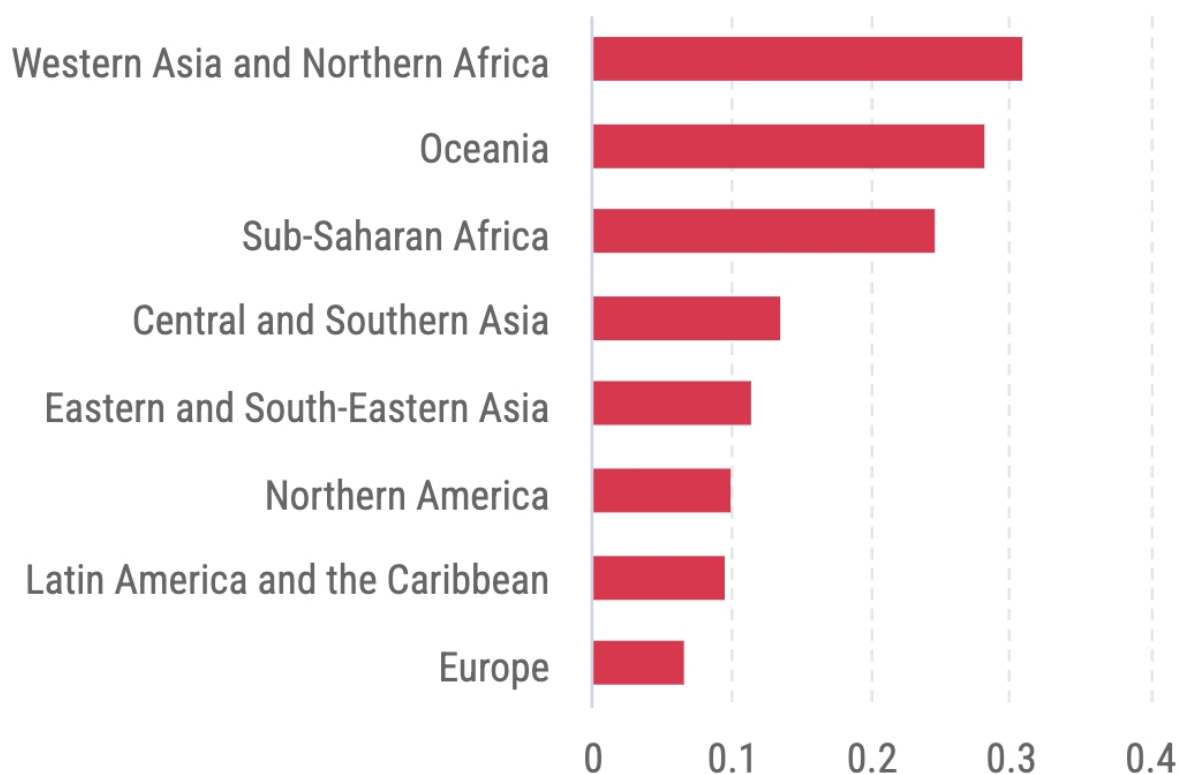
In Africa, population is not the only factor that is growing fast. The [UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2023](#), released yesterday, shows that in 2022, African developing economies experienced one of the highest rise in exports (16.9 per cent) at global level. Unfortunately, the structure of African states remains strongly concentrated in primary goods, which accounted for 79 per cent of merchandise exports, with fuels representing 42 per cent of such exports, followed by ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold. Particularly low, instead, are food exports, representing a modest 11 per cent of outward trade flows of the continent, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Export structure of developing economies by product group, 2022



UNCTAD has developed the product concentration index to measure the extent to which a large share of exports is accounted for by a small number of product groups. An high value in this index (close to 1) shows that an economy exports only a limited group of products, while a value close to 0 means a more diversified export basket. In this regard, sub-Saharan Africa performs better than Northern Africa, where exports are heavily dominated by hydrocarbons, but its ranking is quite low, on average (figure 2). Among the Sub-Saharan African economies that are more dependant on export of natural resources, Mali (0.85), Guinea-Bissau (0.85), South Sudan (0.84), and Botswana (0.79), are on the top.

Figure 2: Product concentration index of exports, 2022



With regard to the trade in services sector, Africa performs surprisingly well, having the highest differential between imports and exports, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3: Services trade annual growth rates, 2022



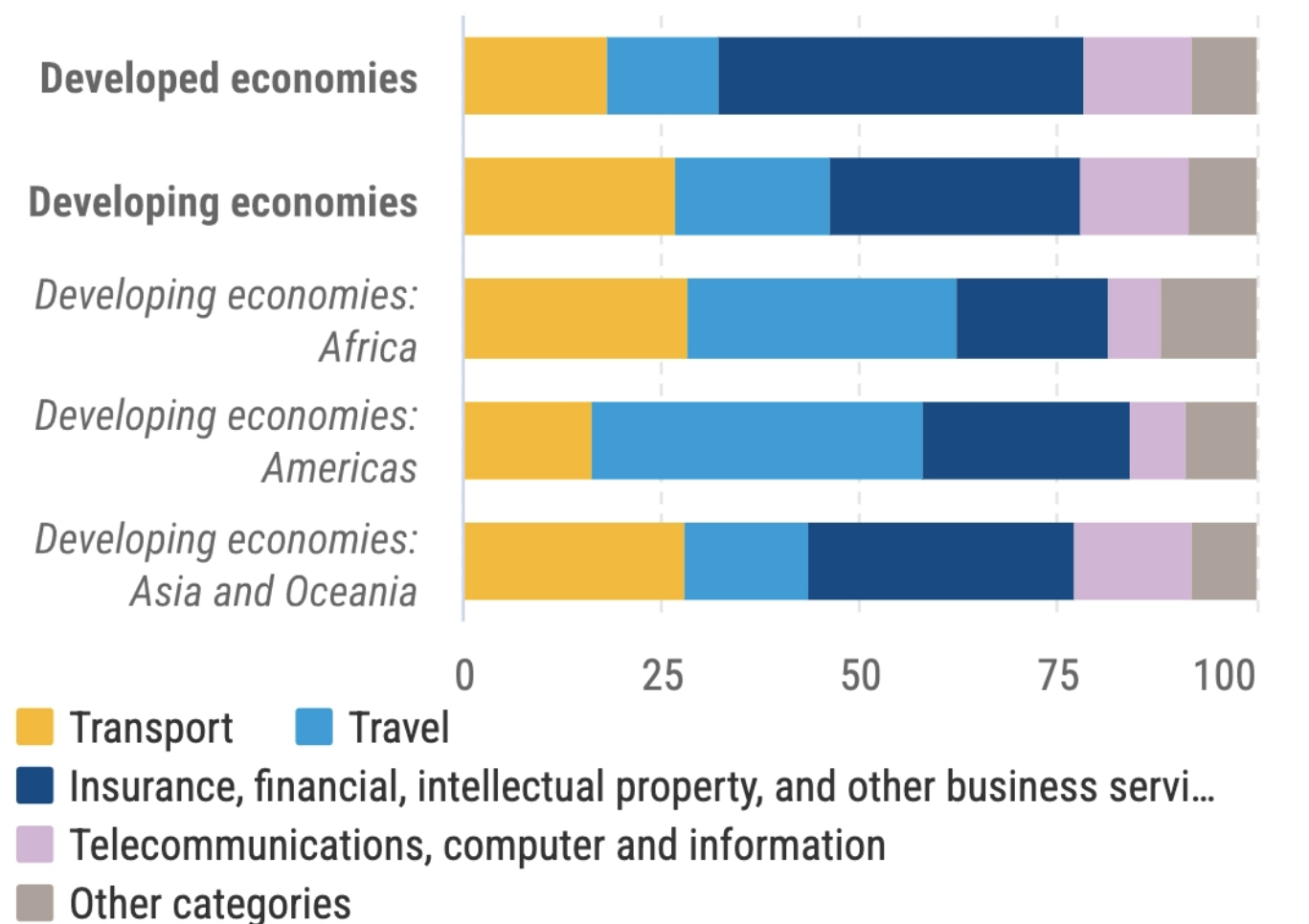


Figure 5: Export trends of digitally deliverable services and other types of services, 2015–2022

