



Impact of COVID-19 on Transport Connectivity

Key Issues

FADIAH ACHMADI

(fadiyah.achmadi@fimotions.com)

UN-OHRLLS Training on Strengthening Capacity to Design and Implement Policies and Identify Solutions that Promote
Transport Connectivity for the Achievement of the SDGs

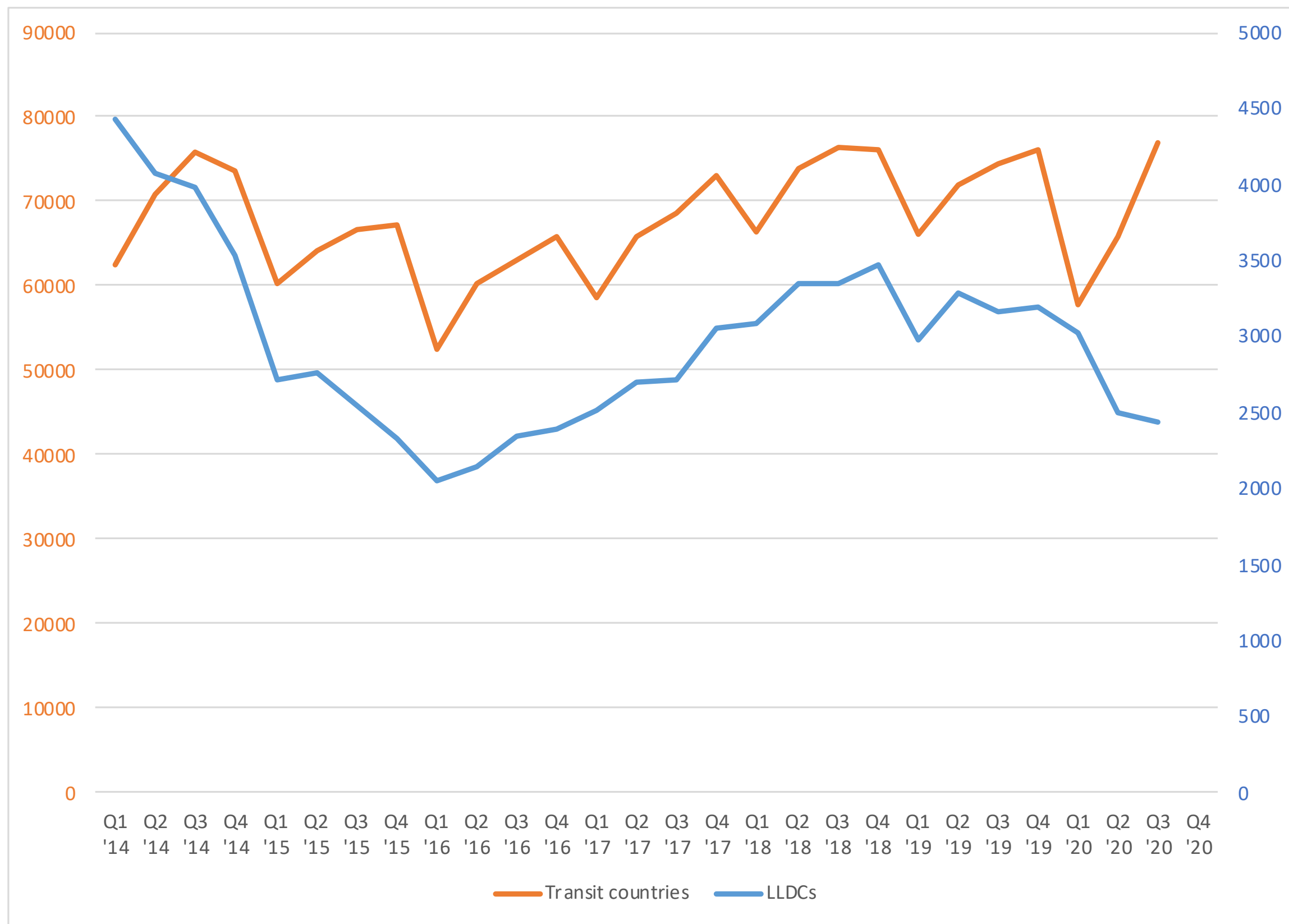
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Overview of COVID-19 impact on transport sector

- In the wake of the pandemic, nearly all countries closed their land, air and sea borders to curtail the spread of the virus
- Disruptions on the transport of materials have caused transport infrastructure projects to be delayed, downgraded or even cancelled → due to a significant loss in road toll revenue and a concern that air travels will not reach the pre-covid level
- **Cross border activities:**
 - Freight restrictions, additional inspections, reduced operational hours of BCP → increase in transit costs and time
 - Impacted timely delivery and access to basic goods for LLDCs that rely heavily on imports
 - Countries implemented cross border regulations without consulting their integration partners → increased waiting time and costs

Disruptions on supply chain

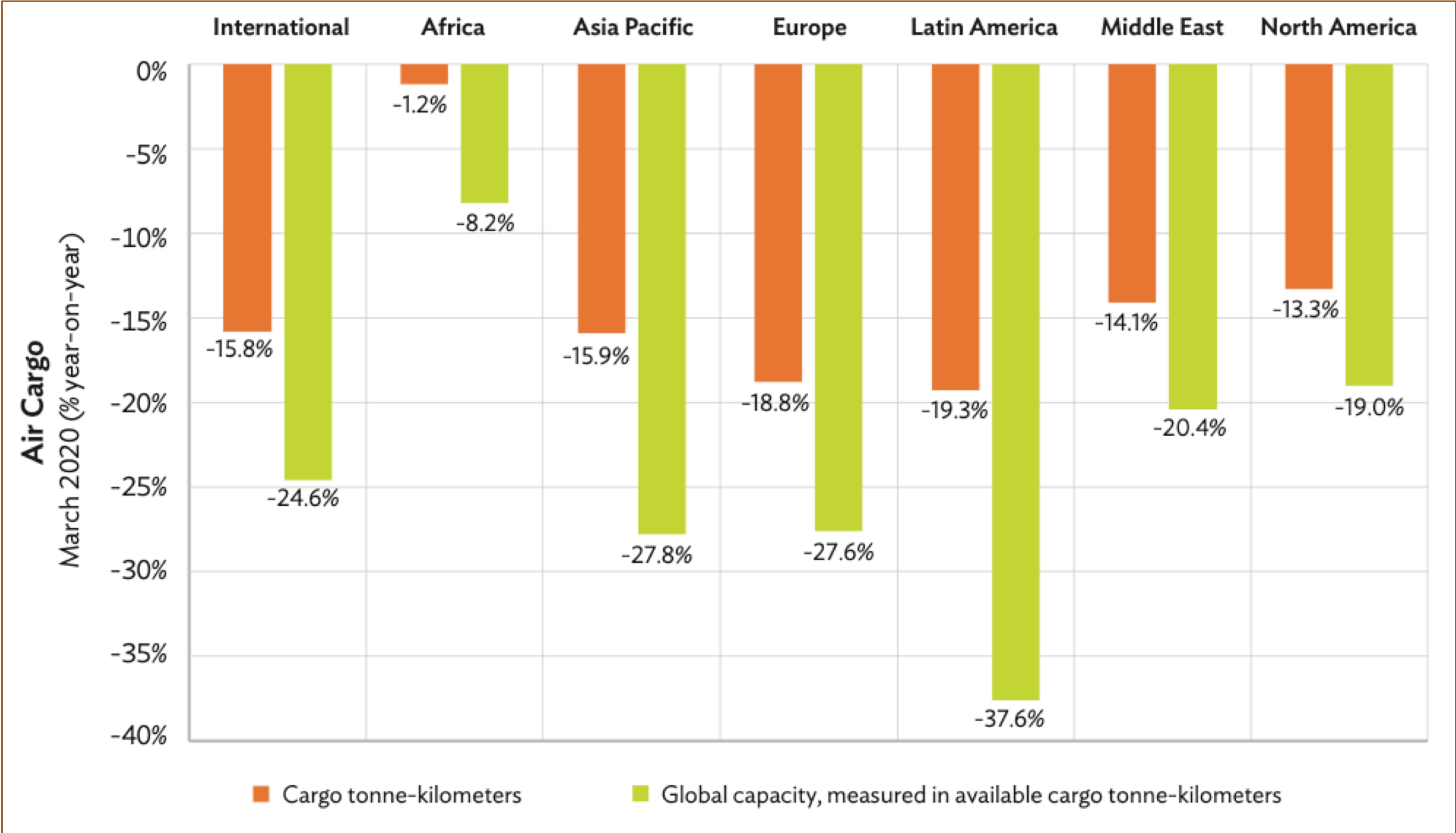
Average total merchandise exports 2014-2020 (million \$US) of LLDCs and transit countries



Source: WTO

Impact on air transport

Air cargo activity and capacity in March 2020, compared with March 2019



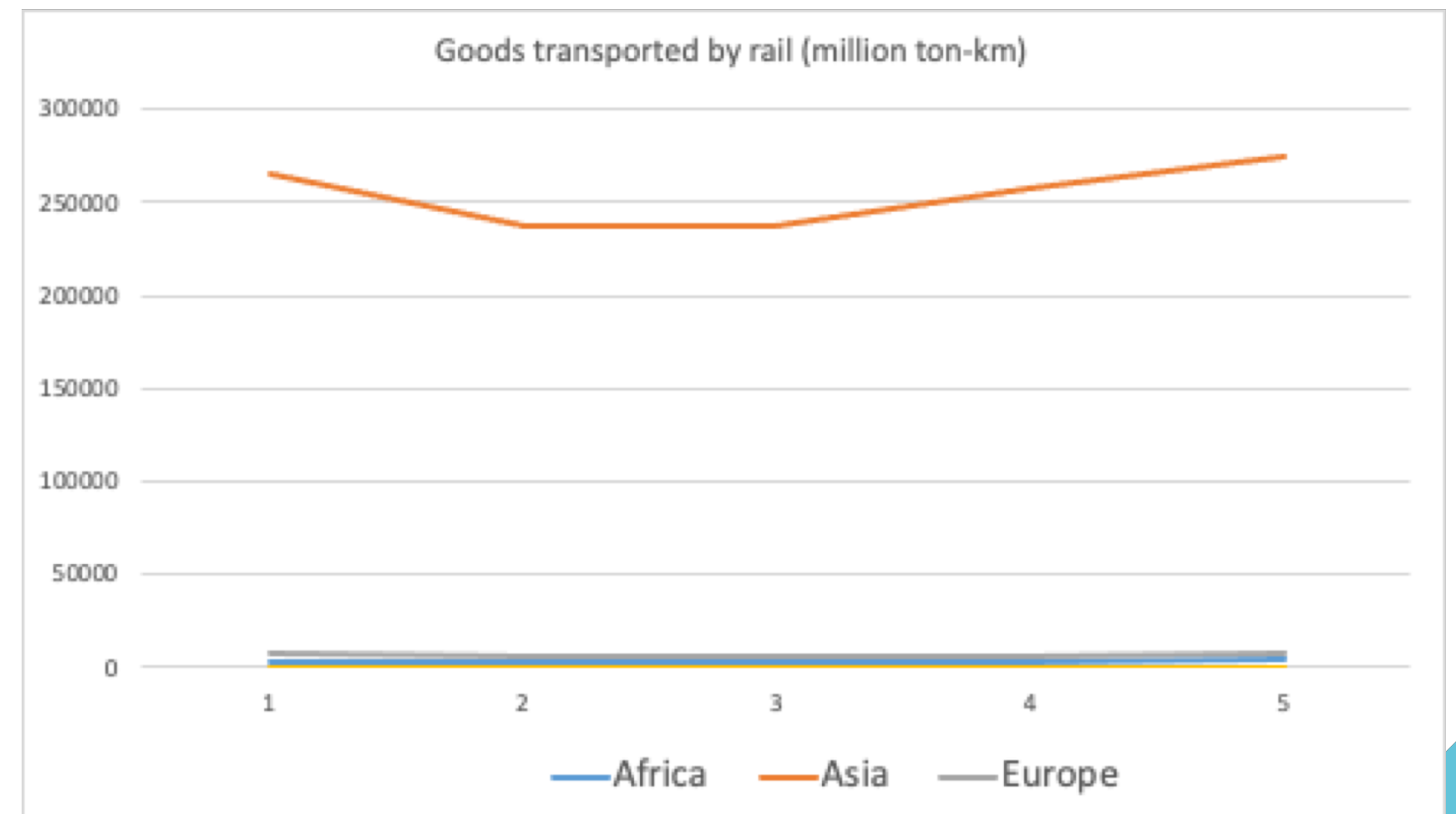
Impact on road transport

- Road transport may have been the second most affected mode of freight transport after air transport.
- Heavy dependence of LLDCs on road transport in freight transport operations has paid its toll during the COVID-19 pandemic as road transport is vulnerable to bottlenecks and operational restrictions, along with additional costs
- Need to set standards at road border crossing points to uphold public health whilst allowing the smooth flow of trucks → border closures could be limited to a few days or even avoided.
- The covid crisis showed the importance of promoting a higher share of other modes of transport, such as rail and intermodal transport that is efficient, safe, reliable and environmentally friendly.

Impact on rail transport

- Rail freight has proven to be resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic: less manpower, less human interactions, lower potential of spreading the virus
- Disrupted international maritime trade
→ overland freight routes in East Asia and Europe became popular
- Despite initial disruptions, the overland alternatives turned out to be more profitable due to more reliable delivery schedules than air freight
- Freight flows for transit Euro-Asian routes via Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Belarus, were 75% higher in the second quarter of 2020 than for the same quarter in 2019 (ESCAP).
- Uzbekistan and Afghanistan also experienced significant growth in rail freight in 2020

Rail freight in LLDCs in the last 5 years



Source: World Bank

Relevant studies on COVID-19 impact on transport connectivity

- Facilitating Cross-Border Trade Through a Coordinated African Response to Covid-19:
<https://www.uneca.org/facilitating-cross-border-trade-through-coordinated-african-response-covid-19>
- COVID-19 and the Maritime and Logistics Sector in Africa:
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34080/COVID-19-and-the-Maritime-and-Logistics-Sector-in-Africa%20%281%29.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>
- Intermodal Transport in the Age of COVID-19 Practices, Initiatives and Responses:
https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/2017694_E_web.pdf
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Trade and Trade Facilitation Along the Ethiopia-Djibouti Corridor:
<https://www.pacci.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ITFE-Briefing-Paper-IMPACT-OF-COVID19-ON-TRADE-AND-TRADE-FACILITATION-ALONG-THE-ETHIOPIA-DJIBOUTI-CORRIDOR.pdf>
- COVID-19 Measures in Member States: https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Measures-in-COMESA-MS-in-Response-to-Covid-Vol-21_11_9_20.pdf
- The impact of COVID-19 on transport and logistics connectivity in the landlocked countries of South America:
https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/46528/S2000768_en.pdf

Thank you for your attention ...

