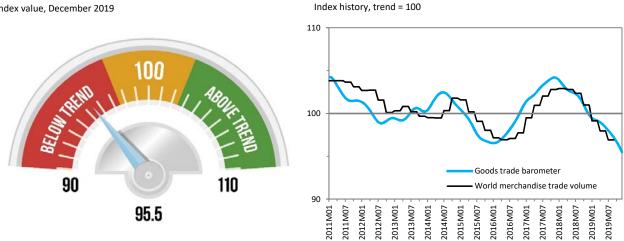


# **Goods Trade Barometer**

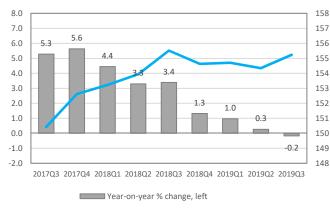
# Goods barometer signals further weakening of trade into first quarter

## Goods trade barometer

Index value, December 2019



The WTO's Goods Trade Barometer provides real-time information on the trajectory of world trade relative to recent trends. The latest reading of 95.5 is lower than the previous reading of 96.6 in November 2019, signaling that trade volume growth may continue to weaken into early 2020. The slow start could be be dampened further by global health threats and other recent developments in the first few months of the year, which are not yet accounted for in the barometer's best-available historical data.



# World merchandise trade volume

Seasonally Adjusted Index 2005=100, right

# **Drivers of goods trade**

Component index values, trend = 100

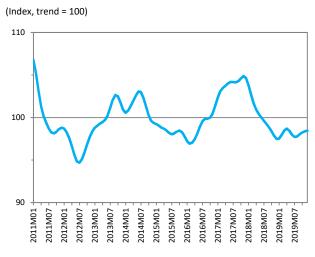


Previously, the seasonally adjusted index (blue line) had indicated a slight growth in trade volumes as of the third quarter of 2019, in a reversal of declines recorded since the fourth quarter of 2018. However, on a year-on-year comparison, world merchandise trade volume was 0.2% lower in 2019Q3 relative to the same quarter in 2018 in line with expectations from the barometer index of Nov 2019. The latest barometer reading suggests that year-on-year growth in trade is likely to continue to remain below trend in 2019Q4 and early 2020.

The lower barometer reading is driven by further drops in container shipping (94.8) and agricultural raw materials (90.9) and a plateauing for automotive products (100.0). Meanwhile, the decline in export orders (98.5) and electronic components (92.8) appear to be stabilizing, and the weak performance of air freight (94.6) through 2019 seems to have bottomed out. However, the performance of these component indices will also depend on the emerging impact of COVID-19 and how quickly the global economy can recover.

## **Component indices**

#### **Export orders**



(Index, trend = 100) 110 100 90 2011M07 2012M01 -2012M07 -2013M07 -2015M07 -2016M01 2016M07 -2018M01 2018M07 2013M01 2014M01 2014M07 2015M01 2017M07 2019M07 2011M01 2017M01 2019M01

Source: IATA.

98.5

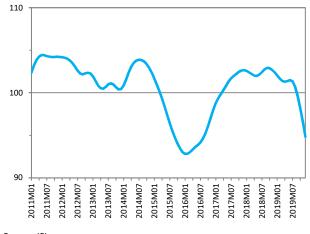
94.8

92.8

#### Source: IHS Markit.

**Container port throughput** 

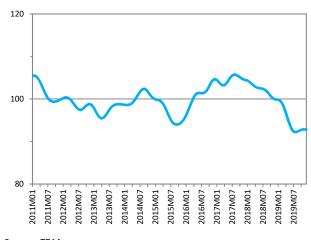
(Index, trend = 100)



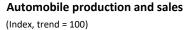
Source: ISL

#### **Electronic components**

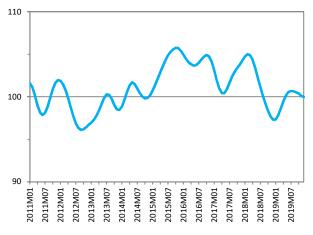
(Index, trend = 100)



Source: TDM.



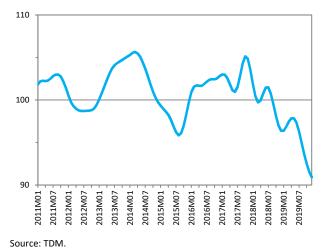
International air freight (IATA)



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, ACEA, JAMA, National Bureau of Statistics China.

# Agricultural raw materials





94.6

100.0

90.9

#### Notes



Data on international air freight courtesy of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Air freight has proved to be a very timely indicator of overall world trade and an early signal of turning points in recessions. Further information and analysis available here: Background: <u>http://www.iata.org/publications/economic-briefings/Air\_freight\_and\_world\_trade.pdf</u> IATA Quarterly Analysis: <u>http://www.iata.org/cargochartbook</u> <u>monthly-analysis</u>

Other sources: WTO Secretariat for quarterly merchandise trade volume, TDM Trade Data Monitor database for electronic components and agricultural raw materials, Institute for Shipping Economics and Logistics for container throughput. Export orders from IHS-Markit Global PMI.

Details on the methodology of the trade outlook indicator are available on the WTO website at the following address: https://www.wto.org/english/news\_e/news19\_e/methodology\_wtoi\_15aug19\_e.pdf

Short-term WTO trade statistics (quarterly and monthly) can be obtained here: <u>https://www.wto.org/english/res\_e/statis\_e/short\_term\_stats\_e.htm</u>

The WTO issues a separate semi-annual trade forecasts projecting trade growth over two years. The latest release is available for download here: https://www.wto.org/english/news\_e/pres19\_e/pr840\_e.htm