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MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

RICE (*ORYZA SATIVA*)

ISSUE 1 OF 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Rice (*Oryza sativa/Oryza glaberrima*), domesticated approximately 13,500 years ago, is a cereal crop from the Poaceae family. It is a semi-aquatic plant that requires consistent irrigation throughout its growth cycle. As a tropical crop, rice can be cultivated during both dry and wet seasons, provided sufficient water is available. An annual crop can grow as a perennial in tropical climates, producing multiple harvests through ratooning. Rice types are broadly categorised by grain length (long, medium, and short) and by processing (white, brown, parboiled), with popular varieties including basmati, jasmine, arborio, black rice, bomba and wild rice, each with unique flavours and textures. Rice is a staple food in many countries, composed of water, protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and a small amount of fat. Globally, rice ranks third in production after sugarcane and maize (Prasad et al., 2017), and it is a crucial source of nutrition and calories. Global rice consumption continues to rise, exceeding 520 million metric tons annually (Shahbandeh, 2024).

Prasad et al. (2017) state that over 50% of the world's population depends on rice for their daily diet, providing about 20% of the global caloric intake. Rice is a key food source for nearly half the world's population, with the majority of production occurring in Asia, particularly in countries like China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam. Given its widespread consumption, fluctuations in rice production and market trends have significant implications for global food security, especially in developing nations (FAOSTAT, 2022; Prasad et al., 2017). China and India alone contribute around 50% of global rice production and consumption (Muthayya et al., 2014).

Although rice is a staple for much of the global population, it remains one of the most protected commodities in international trade, making it a volatile crop and challenging for countries like Namibia to rely on imports to meet domestic demand. In sub-Saharan Africa, rice consumption among urban populations has grown steadily, with per capita consumption doubling since 1970. A similar trend is observed in the Caribbean and Latin American regions, where rice intake has also been increasing (Prasad et al., 2017). Rice, therefore, plays a critical role in the nutrition of populations worldwide, including in Namibia.

In addition to its nutritional value, rice is a key source of income and employment in many developing countries, which could greatly benefit Namibian farmers and traders. Consequently, building a knowledge base on global, continental, and regional rice production, marketing, and Namibia’s role in this sector is crucial.

This market intelligence report analyses global rice production trends, consumption patterns, and potential interventions by local stakeholders. It also examines Namibia’s participation in the global rice

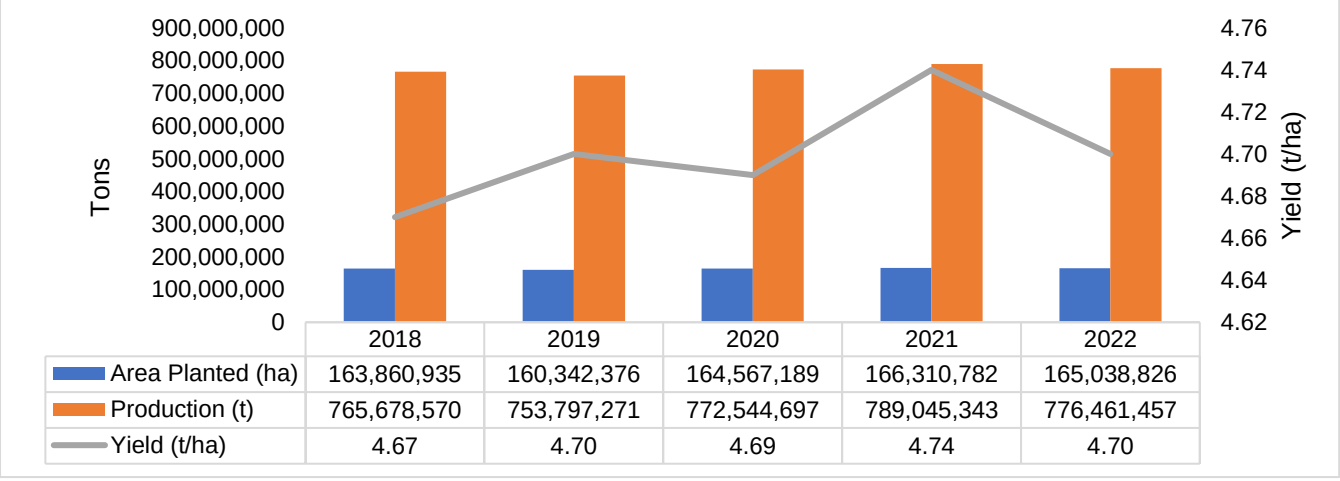
market, thus providing insights for farmers, policymakers, and decision-makers on the opportunities within rice production and marketing. The findings highlight the importance of public, private, and farmer investments in boosting rice production for both domestic consumption and export markets associated with the production and marketing of rice, as well as the need for public, private, and farmer investments to increase rice production for both domestic and export markets.

2. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

This section offers a comprehensive global overview of rice, highlighting key trends in average annual production, trade (exports and imports), and consumption from 2018 to 2022.

PRODUCTION: The global production volume of rice has steadily increased, driven by advancements in agricultural technology, improved seed varieties, and better farming practices (Muthayya et al., 2014). This amounted to 3,857,527,338 tons over 5 years from 2018 to 2022. Major rice-producing countries such as China, India, and Indonesia continue to lead global output, with production showing resilience despite challenges like climate change and fluctuating market conditions (FAOSTAT, 2022).

Figure 1 illustrates the global area planted and production volumes for rice from 2018 to 2022. On average, global rice production exceeds 771 million tons annually, covering around 164 million hectares, indicating a relatively stable cultivation area throughout the five years. The cultivated land experienced minor variations, dropping to 160.34 million hectares in 2019 and reaching a peak of 166.31 million hectares in 2021. Rice production followed a similar trend, decreasing from 765.68 million tons in 2018 to 753.80 million tons in 2019, then gradually rising to a high of 789.05 million tons in 2021. By 2022, production slightly decreased to 776.46 million tons, while the five-year average remained robust at 771.51 million tons.



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Area Planted (ha)	163,860,935	160,342,376	164,567,189	166,310,782	165,038,826
Production (t)	765,678,570	753,797,271	772,544,697	789,045,343	776,461,457
Yield (t/ha)	4.67	4.70	4.69	4.74	4.70

Figure 1: *Global rice production and area planted (2018-2022).* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

Figure 2 displays the top ten rice-producing countries based on a five-year average from 2018 to 2022. China leads global rice production, with an average annual yield surpassing 210.99 million tons, accounting for 33% of the world's rice production, thus making it the world's top producer. India follows closely with an output of 185.99 million tons (29%), while Indonesia ranks third, producing 55.52 million tons (9%) annually (FAOSTAT, 2022).

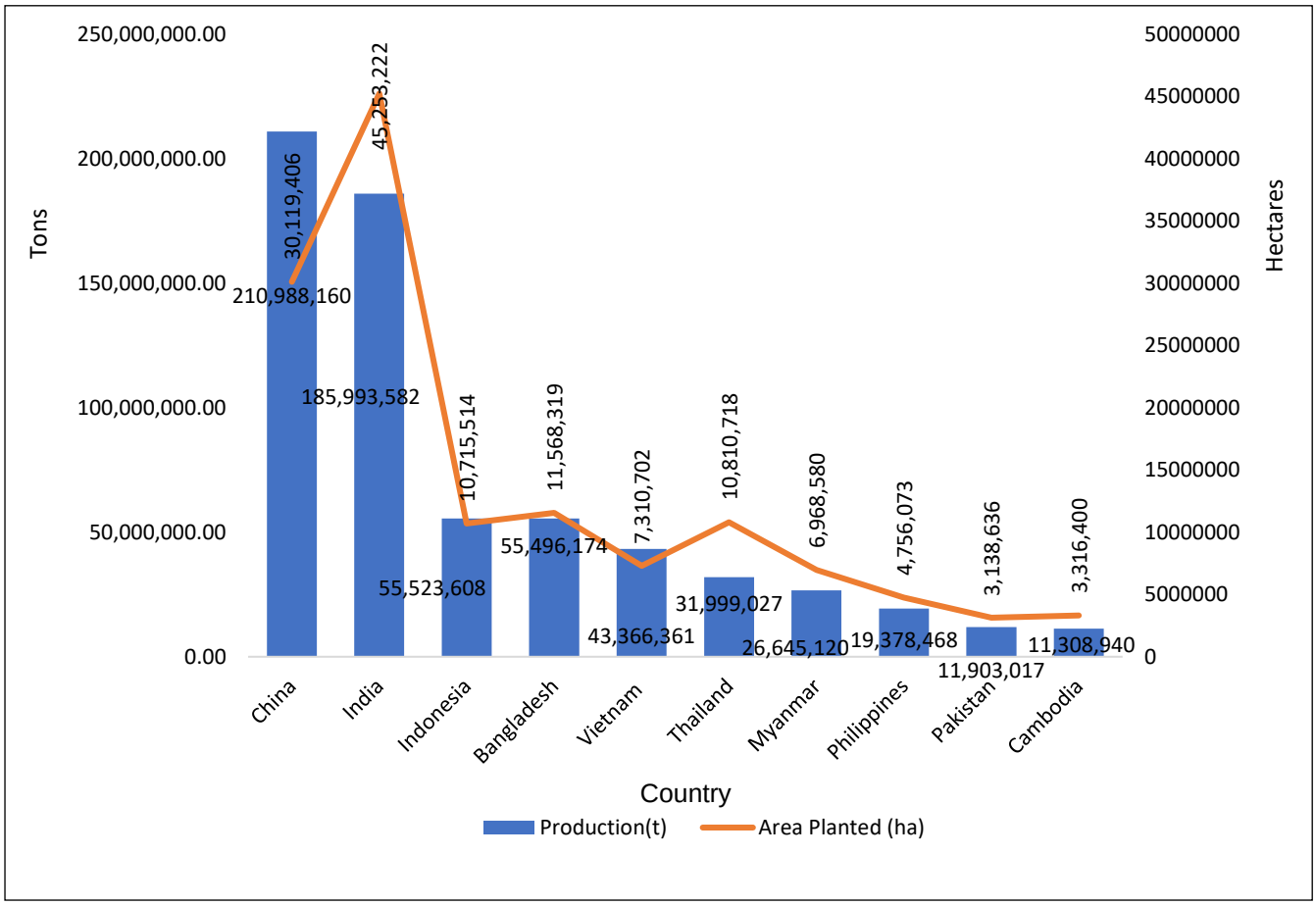


Figure 2: *Top ten rice-producing countries in the world (Average of 2018 -2022)*

Source: *FAOSTAT (2022)*

Figure 3 shows the global rice production percentage share across continents from 2018 to 2022. Asia dominates global rice production, contributing 87% of the total. This highlights Asia as the primary rice-producing region, driven by major rice-growing countries like China, India, and Vietnam. Africa and the Americas each account for 6% of the total rice production. While these regions are relatively smaller contributors compared to Asia, they still represent significant production, particularly in countries like Brazil in the Americas and Nigeria in Africa. Oceania and Europe have minimal contributions to global rice production, with 0% and a very small, barely visible portion for Europe.

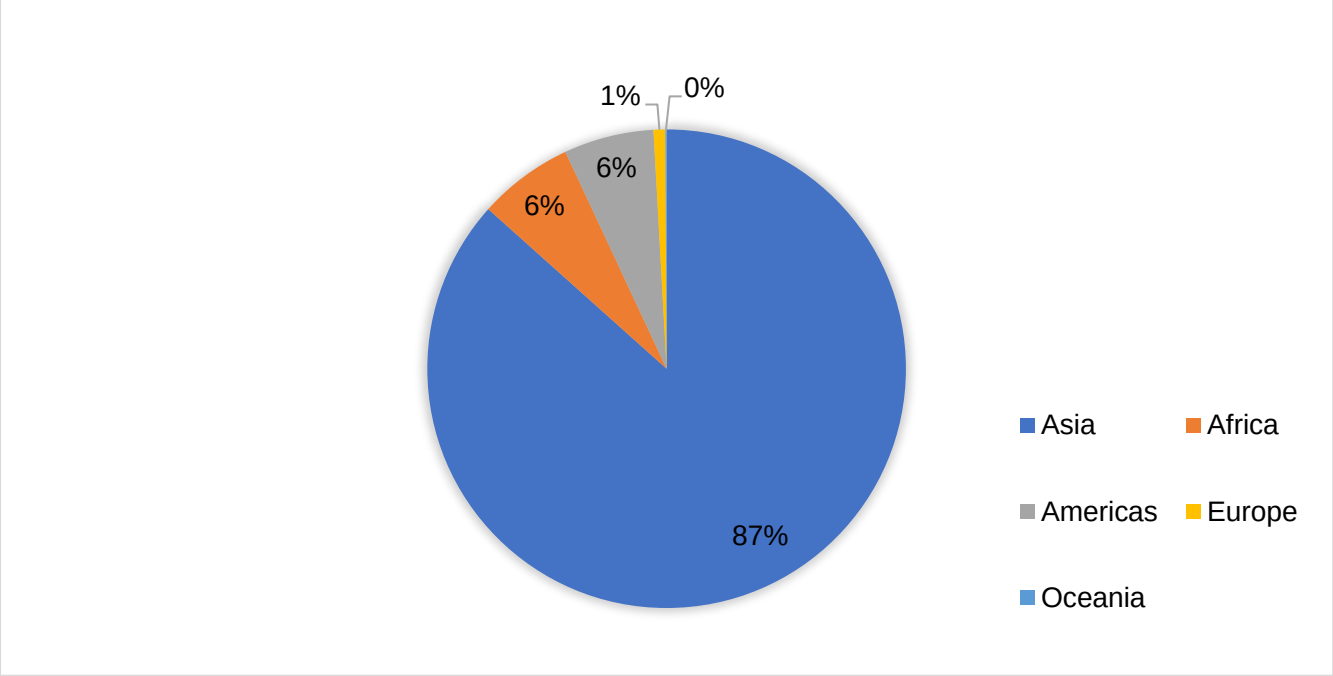


Figure 3: *Global Rice Production percentage share across the continent (Average of 2018-2022)*
Source: *FAOSTAT (2022)*

TRADE (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS): Rice plays a crucial role in global trade, with substantial quantities being exchanged between countries. Major rice exporters, including the USA, Brazil, and India, dominate the international market, supplying rice to regions that depend on imports for food security, such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East (FAOSTAT, 2022). In recent years, rice import volumes and values have experienced steady growth, reflecting rising demand in both emerging and developed economies.

IMPORTS: Globally, rice imports have steadily increased, reflecting a growing demand across various regions. This trend is accompanied by a rise in the value of rice imports, indicating the crop's vital role in meeting global food security needs (FAOSTAT, 2022).

Figure 4 displays five-year averages of global rice import volumes (tons) and values (US$). The displayed constant increase in global rice import value shows increasing consumption of rice and prospect market opportunities for producers (FAOSTAT, 2022). Between 2018 and 2021, global rice imports increased from 3,175,511 tons to 3,601,557 tons, with 2021 marking the highest volume at 3,601,557 tons, while 2019 saw the lowest at 2,791,792 tons. On average, around 3,190,045 tons of rice are imported each year.

For the import value, **Figure 4** below highlights a rise from US$1.3 billion (N$25 billion) in 2018 to US$1.7 billion (N$32 billion) in 2021 before declining to US$1.5 billion (N$30.1 billion) in 2022. The

lowest value occurred in 2019 at US$1 billion (N$19.9 billion). On average (5 years), annual rice imports are valued at approximately US$1.4 billion (N$26.6 billion).

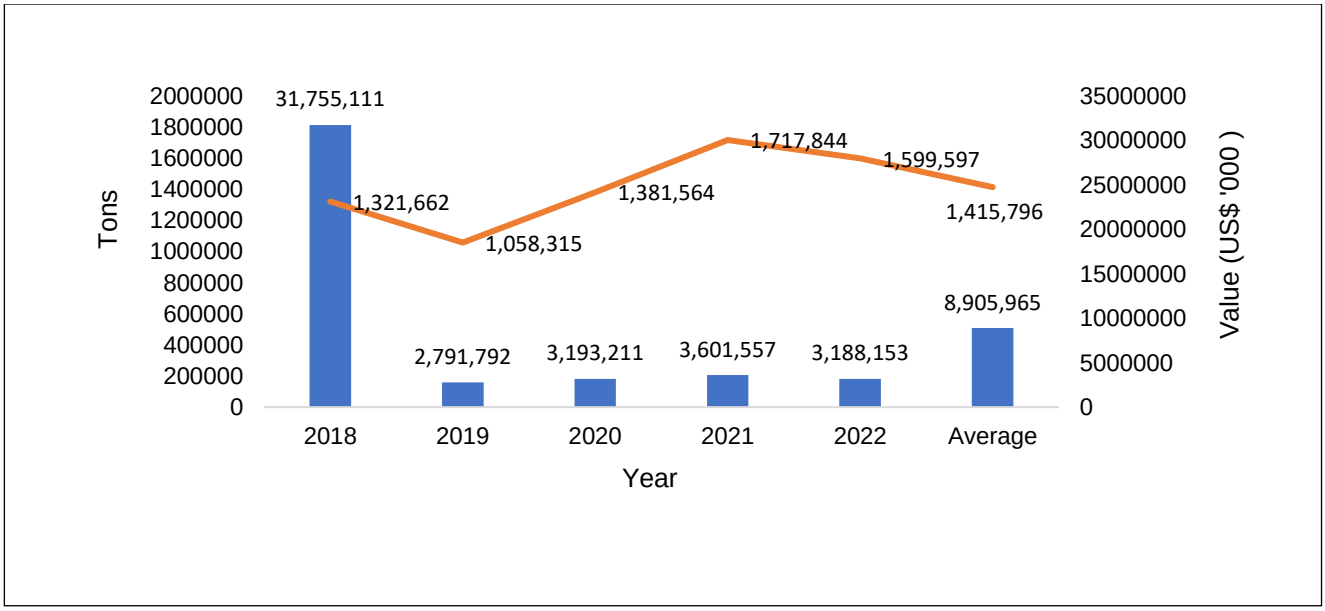


***Figure 4**: Global rice import volume (t) and value (US$) – (Average of 2018 – 2022)*

***Source:** FAOSTAT (2022)*

Figure 5 highlights the significant roles that Mexico and Vietnam play in global rice imports, with Mexico standing out as the top importer with a value of US$239 million, which is equivalent to approximately N$4 million. Vietnam follows closely, reflecting its strong demand for rice with imports worth US$205 million. On the other hand, Brazil (US$32 million, equivalent to approximately N$613 million) imports relatively smaller amounts of rice.

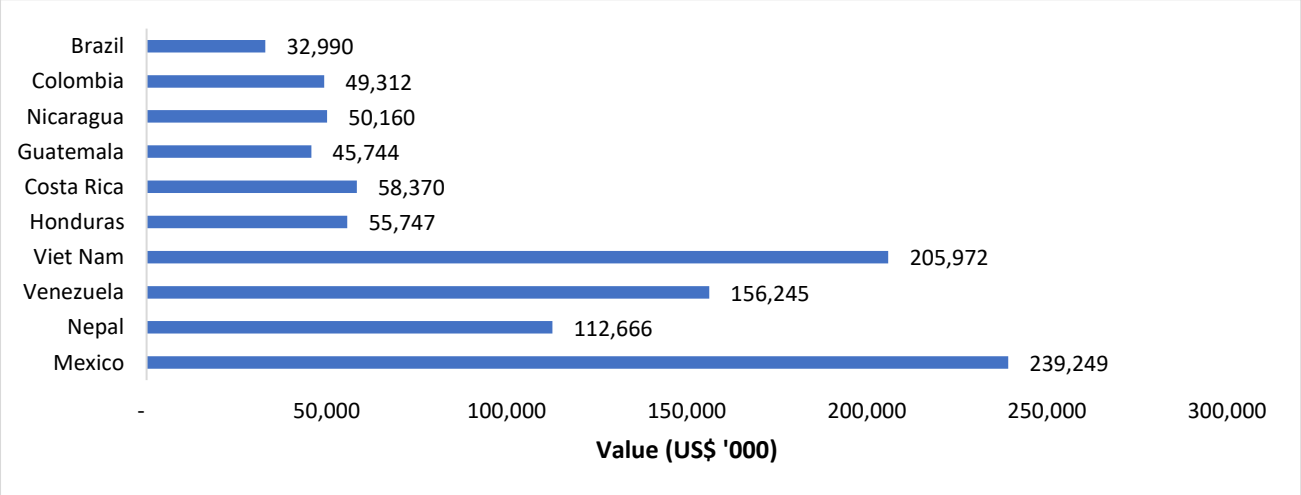


***Figure 5:** Global top ten rice-importing countries by value (US$) (2022)*

***Source:** FAOSTAT (2022). (**Conversion date:** 02/04/2025)*

Figure 6 presents the global distribution of rice imports across different countries, showing Mexico as the largest importer with 28%, followed by Nepal at 18% and Venezuela at 15%. Other notable importers include Vietnam (9%), Honduras (6%), and Costa Rica (6%). The remaining countries, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Brazil, account for smaller shares, ranging from 4% to 5%.

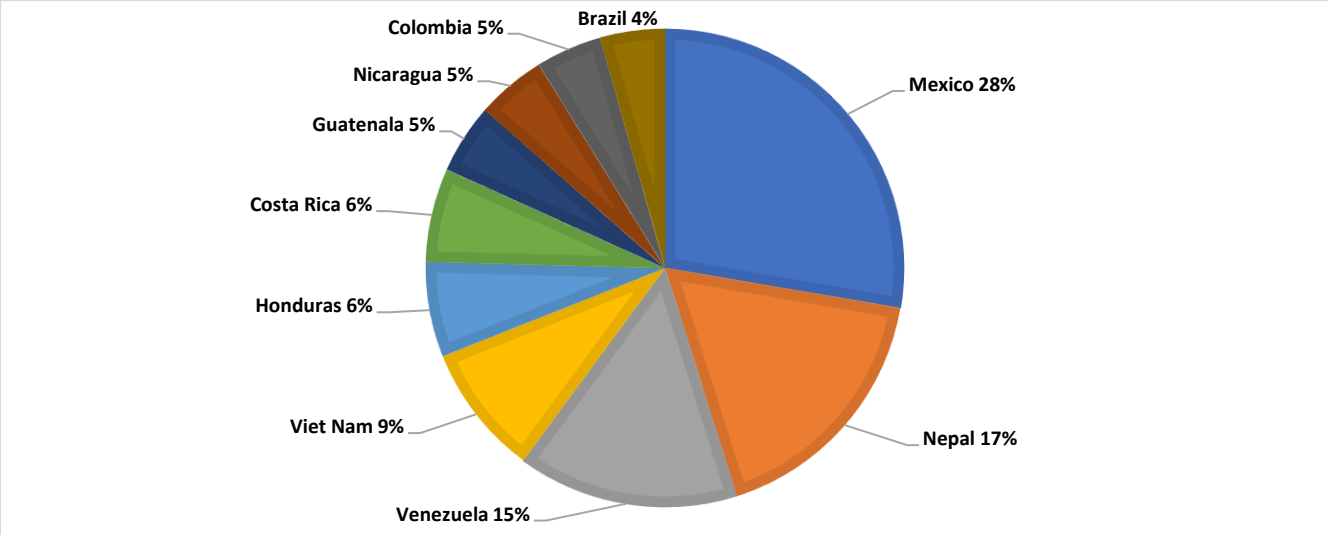


Figure 6: *Percentage share in global imports - 2022* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

EXPORT: Figure 7 displays the global rice export volumes and values from 2018 to 2022. Approximately 2,916,715 tons of rice are exported annually worldwide, valued at US$1 billion (equivalent to N$19 billion). Over recent years, global rice exports have shown fluctuations, with the highest export volume recorded in 2020 at 3,142,765 tons (US$1 billion), while the lowest was in 2019 when 2,643,331 tons were exported at a value of US$ 861 million (N$16 billion). According to FAOSTAT (2022), these trends are based on a five-year average from 2018 to 2022, reflecting the variability and significance of rice as a globally traded commodity.

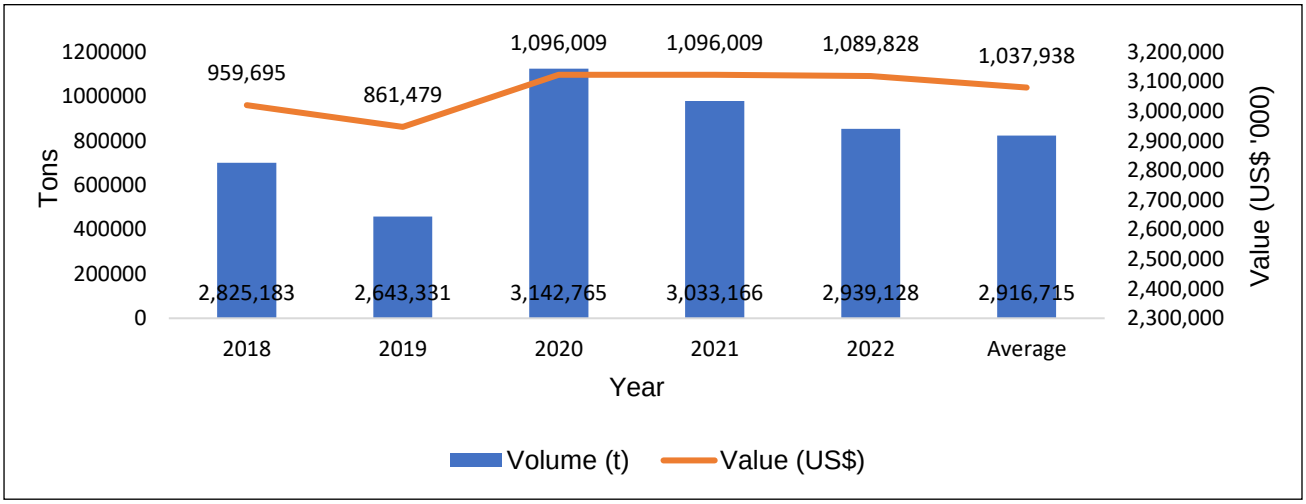


Figure 7: *Global rice export volume and value from 2018 - 2022* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

According to **Figure 8**, the USA recorded the highest export volume, totalling 1,355,500 tons, valued at over US$289 million, which is equivalent to approximately N$5 billion. Brazil followed with an export volume of 535,894 tons, amounting to a value of US$95 million, which is approximately N$1,7 billion (FAOSTAT, 2022).

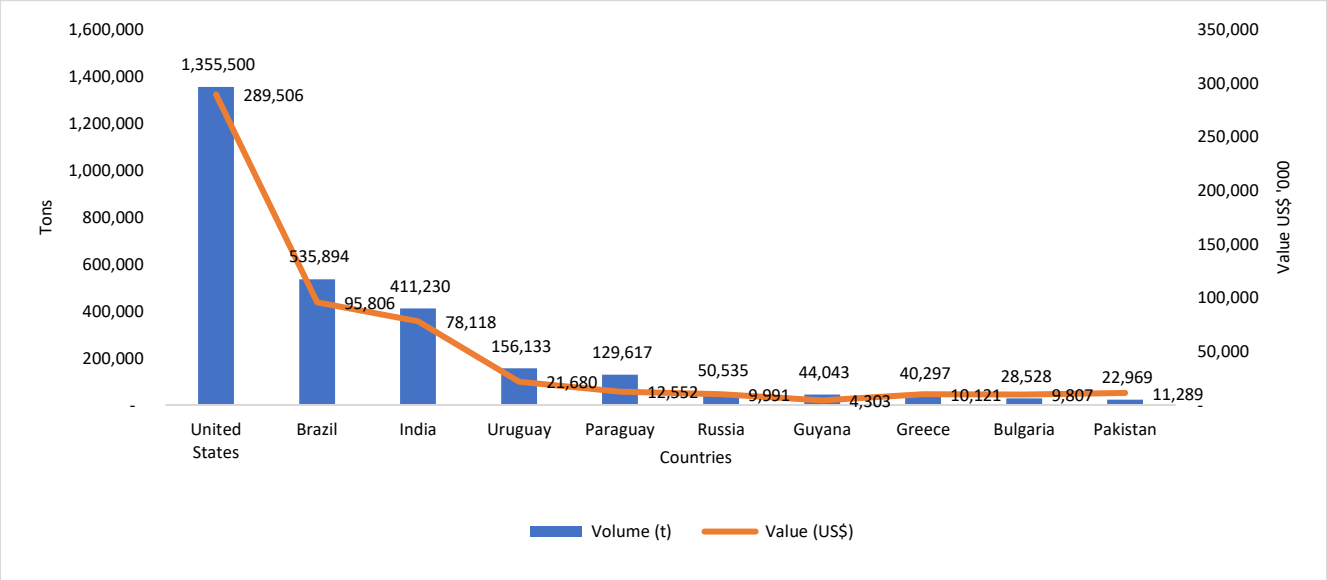


***Figure 8**: Top ten rice exporting countries by value - 2022.* ***Source:** FAOSTAT (2022) (**Conversion date:** 02/04/2025).*

As shown in **Figure 9**, the USA leads global rice exports, contributing 49% of the total average tonnage, making it the top exporter. Brazil follows in the second place, accounting for 19% of global rice exports. In contrast, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, and Spain are among the smallest exporters, each holding just 1% of the average tonnage. This distribution highlights the significant influence of the USA and Brazil in the global rice export market, while Greece, Spain, Pakistan, Guyana, Russia, Paraguay, and Uruguay play relatively minor roles.

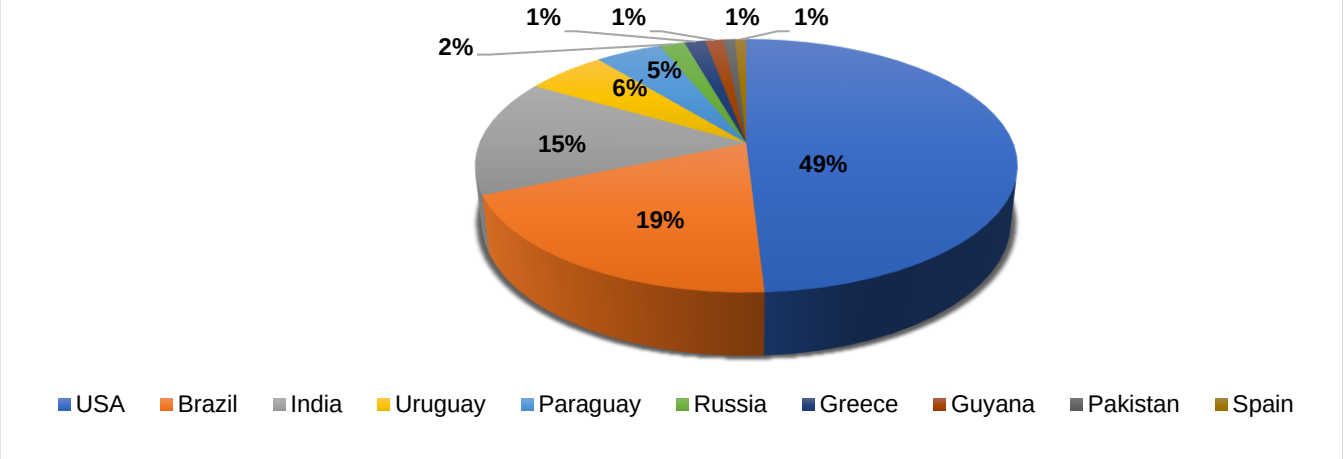


***Figure 9:** Percentage share in global exports (Average 2018 – 2022)* ***Source:** FAOSTAT (2022)*

PRICES: Table 1 depicts different rice prices from various countries between 2018 and 2022. The highest price was observed in Vietnam, where the average price reached US$915 (N$15,911.64) per tonne. In contrast, Brazil recorded the lowest average rice price during the same period, at US$302 (N$ 5,189.87) per tonne. This variation in rice prices highlights significant differences in the cost of rice imports across countries, likely influenced by factors such as production capacity, import volumes, and transportation costs (FAOSTAT, 2022).

Table 1: Average rice import prices per tonne in different countries

Countries	Rice price per tonne, five-year average: 2018 – 2022	
	Average Import Price US$/t	Average Price N$/t
Mexico	344	5,911.64
Nepal	257	4,416.55
Venezuela	416	7,148.96
Vietnam	915	15,724.28
Honduras	344	5,911.64
Costa Rica	367	6,306.90
Guatemala	367	6,306.90
Colombia	440	7,561.40
Brazil	302	5,189.87
Turkey	414	7,114.59

Source: *FAOSTAT (2022)*

The average rice export prices (US$/t) from 2018 to 2022 across several countries provide valuable insights into their respective positions in the global rice market. **Table 2** offers a comparative overview of rice export prices per tonne across various countries globally, with prices shown in both US dollars (US$) and Namibian dollars (N$). Spain recorded the highest export price at US$450 (N$7,733.25) per tonne, while Pakistan had the lowest at US$204 (N$3,505.74) per tonne. This contrast highlights significant variations in rice export pricing among countries.

Table 2: **Export rice prices per tonne in different countries**

Countries	Rice price per tonne, five-year average: 2018 – 2022	
	Export Price US$/t	***Export Price N$/t***
USA	330	5,671.05
Brazil	296	5,086.76
India	329	5,653.87
Uruguay	317	5,447.65
Paraguay	245	4,210.33
Russia	351	6,031.94
Greece	273	4,691.51
Guyana	307	5,258.61
Pakistan	204	3,505.74
Spain	450	7,733.25

Source: *FAOSTAT (2022)*

CONSUMPTION: Rice is an essential food commodity in the world for basic nutrition and calories, contributing significantly to food security. As populations grow and urbanisation increases, global rice consumption continues to increase, surpassing roughly 520 million metric tons annually (Prasad et al., 2017). Over 50% of the world's population consumes rice as their daily diet, providing 20% of the world's calories. Its continued increased consumption is with the ever-rapidly increasing world population (Muthayya et al., 2014). The increasing consumption of rice triggers prospective market opportunities for producers and traders.

Daily per capita rice consumption is among the highest in Asia, with Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines reporting intakes of >300 g (>110 kg per capita annually). The high consumption of rice has also been reported in Latin America and Caribbean countries, including Guyana, Suriname, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. The global average consumption of rice is 125 g per capita per day (45 kg per capita annually), while it has risen to 195 g per capita per day (70 kg per capita annually) in the Caribbean (Jeong, 2017). Rice consumption is on the rise in the Pacific Island countries of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji. The bulk of the rice produced worldwide is consumed in the form of rice kernels and grains and includes a proportion of broken kernels (Muthayya et al., 2014).

As illustrated in **Figure 10**, rice consumption has increased gradually each year, rising from 485 million tons in 2018 to 520 million tons in 2022. This reflects a clear upward trend in demand for rice over the five-year period.

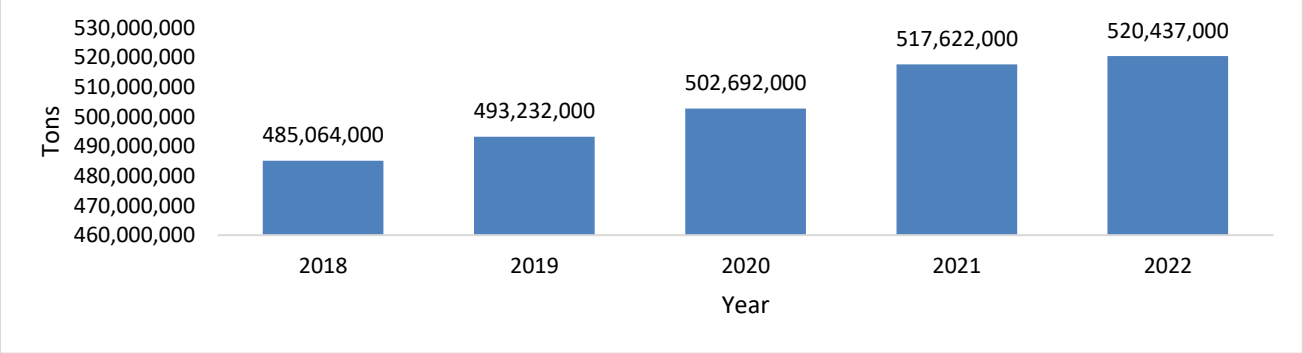


Figure 10: *Global rice consumption trend* ***Source:*** *World Population Review (2024)*

Figure 11 indicates that China leads in average rice consumption with 185 million tons, representing nearly 29% of the global total. India follows closely, consuming 144.8 million tons, which makes up about 23% of global consumption. Indonesia's consumption is notably lower at 50.2 million tons, yet it still contributes around 8%. Bangladesh consumes an average of 43,538.33 tons, accounting for approximately 7%, while Vietnam's consumption stands at 22,687 tons or 3.6% of the global total.

The overall global average consumption is 629 million tons in 2023, with China and India together responsible for more than half of that amount. Collectively, these five countries, China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, account for approximately 71% of global rice consumption, highlighting Asia's dominant role in global rice demand.

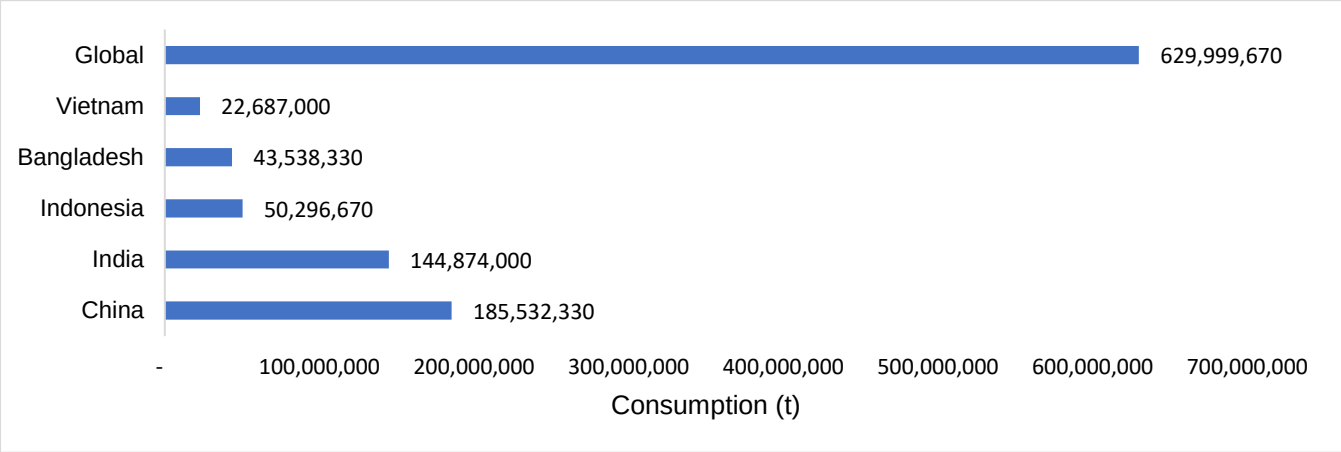


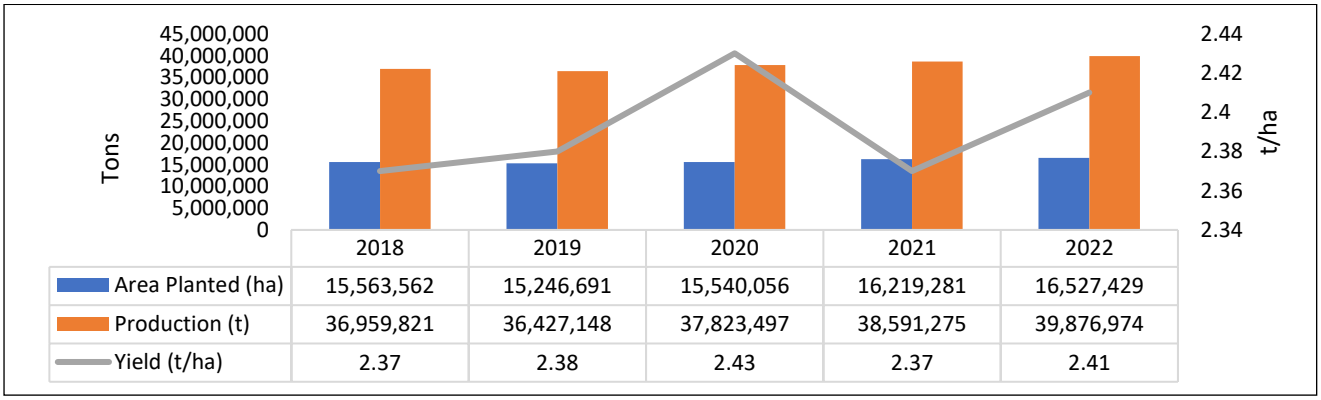
Figure 11: *Global rice consumption trend by country - 2023*

Source: *World Population Review (2024)*

3. AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

This section offers insights into rice production, market dynamics (imports and exports), and price and consumption in Africa.

PRODUCTION: Rice production in Africa steadily increased from 36.9 million tons in 2018 to 39.8 million tons in 2022, showing a general upward trend in output. The lowest production was recorded in 2019, with 36.4 million tons, but output recovered in the following years, showing outstanding year-on-year growth after 2019. The five-year average rice production stands at 37.9 million tons, highlighting consistent improvements in rice output during this period **(Figure 12)**.



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Area Planted (ha)	15,563,562	15,246,691	15,540,056	16,219,281	16,527,429
Production (t)	36,959,821	36,427,148	37,823,497	38,591,275	39,876,974
Yield (t/ha)	2.37	2.38	2.43	2.37	2.41

Figure 12: *Rice production trend in Africa* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

Figure 13 suggests that Nigeria is the leading rice producer in Africa, boasting the largest harvested area of 4,257,474 hectares, which yielded 8,370,922 tons of rice. This makes Nigeria the continent's top producer both in terms of cultivated area and total output. Following Nigeria, Madagascar ranks as the second-largest producer at an area of 1,586,412 hectares.

Egypt ranks as the third top producer in Africa. Despite having a significantly smaller harvested area of 471,233 hectares, Egypt produces 4,254,895 tons of rice. This high yield relative to the cultivated area indicates Egypt's efficient rice farming practices and advanced agricultural technology (Elmoghazy & Elshenawy, 2018).

On the other end of the range, producers like Senegal and Sierra Leone contribute modestly to Africa's total rice production. Senegal cultivates rice on just 365,273 hectares, resulting in a production of 1,300,656 tons. Similarly, Sierra Leone harvested 795,167 hectares, yielding 1,258,375 tons of rice.

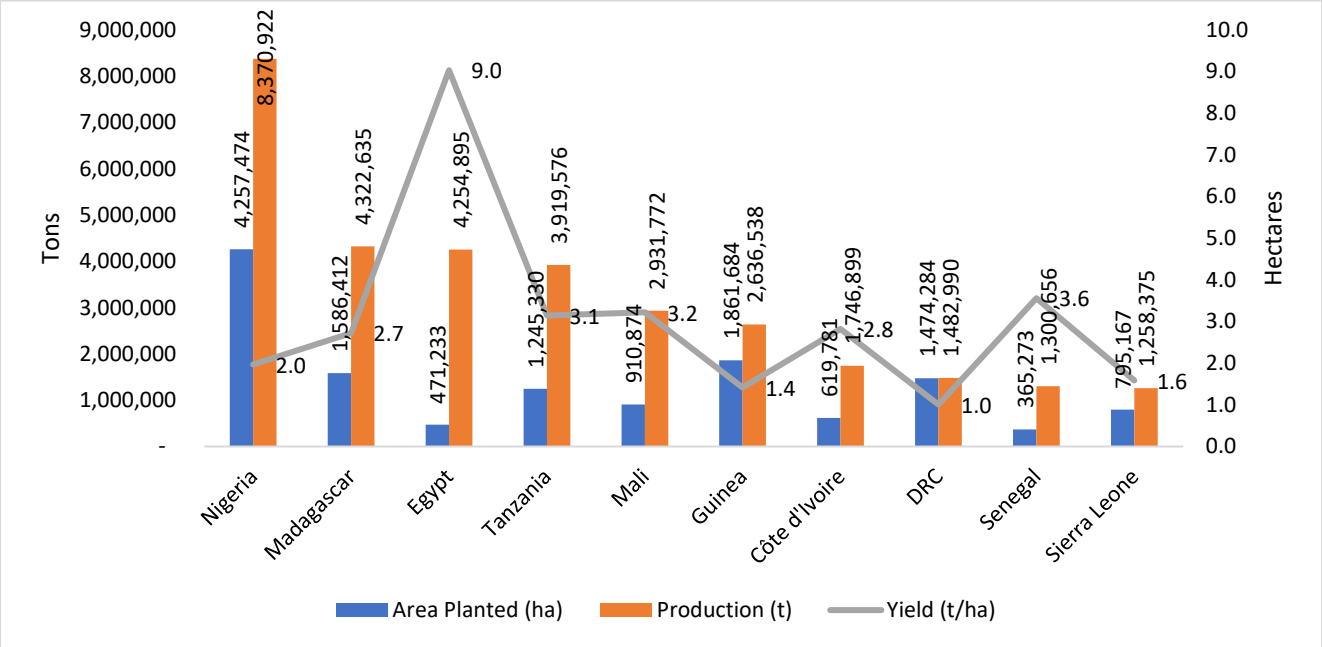


Figure 13: *Top ten rice producers in Africa (Average 2018 - 2022)* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

As illustrated in **Figure 14** below**,** Nigeria is the leading contributor to rice production on the continent, with 27%, followed by Egypt, which accounts for 18%. At the lower end, Senegal and Sierra Leone each contribute 4% to Africa's total rice production.

Despite their lower percentage shares, these figures suggest that both countries have the potential for higher rice production, thus indicating opportunities for growth and further development in their rice farming sectors.

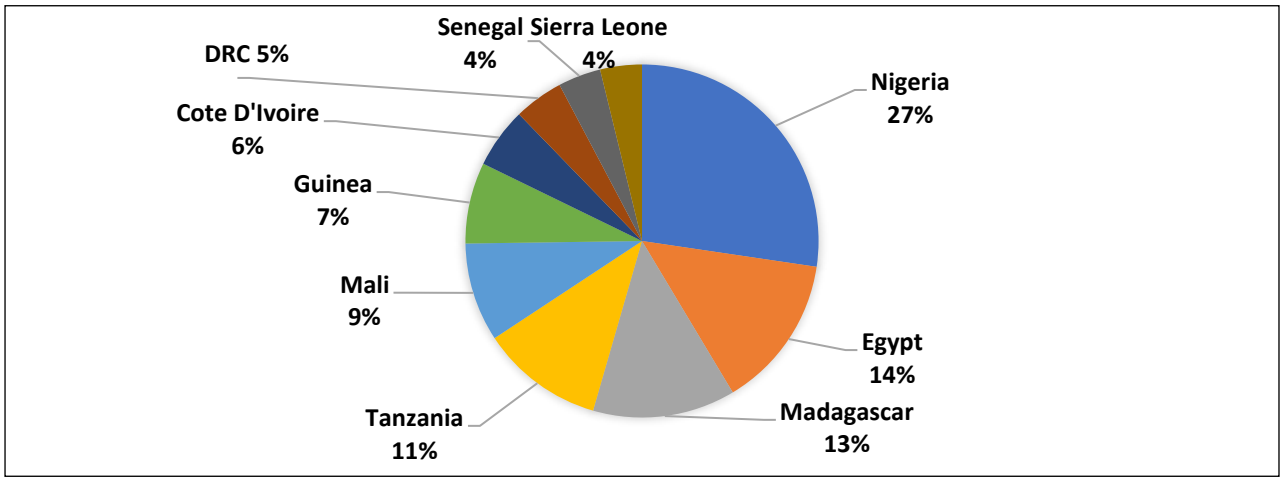


Figure 14: *Rice Production percentage share across the African continent - 2022*

Source: *FAOSTAT (2022)*

IMPORTS: In **Figure 15,** Africa's rice imports declined between 2018 and 2022, with an annual average import volume of 15.8 million tons valued at US$ 5.9 billion (N$ 116.7 billion). The highest import value during this period was recorded in 2021, reaching US$ 6.9 billion (N$ 135.9 billion), while the lowest was in 2020, with a value of US$ 5 billion (N$ 97.9 billion). This downward trend in rice imports in Africa indicates a shift in either consumption patterns, production capabilities, or trade policies in the region (FAOSTAT, 2022).

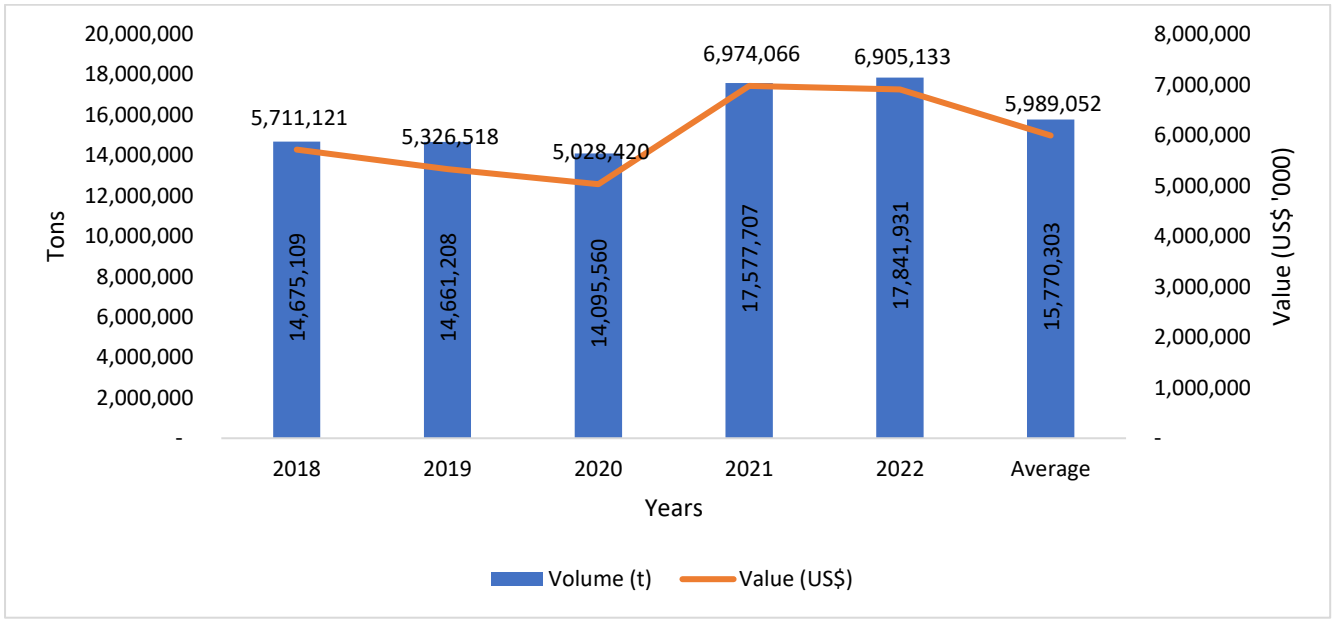


Figure 15: Rice import trend in Africa for over 5 years (Average 2018 – 2022) **Source:** ITC S(2025)

Figure 16 illustrates the rice import volumes (in tons) and value (in US dollars) for several African countries. The figure highlights that Benin recorded the highest average annual import volume of approximately 1.4 million tons valued at US$ 631 million (N$12.3 billion). South Africa follows with an

average import volume of approximately 1.0 million tons valued at US$ 500 million (N$9.8 billion) per annum. The lowest was Kenya with an import volume of 623,639 tons valued at less than US$300 million (N$5.8 billion).

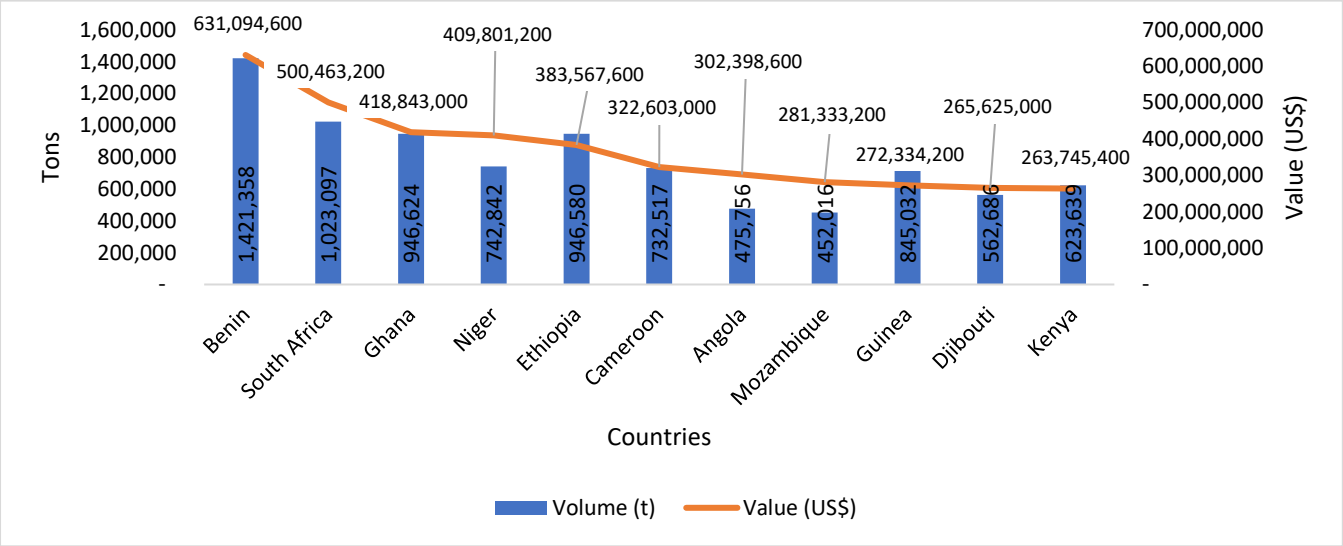


Figure 16: *The top ten leading rice importers in Africa ranked by import volume & value (Average 2018 - 2022)*

Source: *ITC, 2025 (**Conversion date:** 08.04.2025)*

Benin stands out as the most significant contributor to Africa's rice imports, accounting for 16% of the total, followed by South Africa with 12%, while other countries contribute significantly less, each making up less than 12% of the continent's rice imports. This highlights Benin's dominant role in rice importation within Africa (**Figure 17)**.

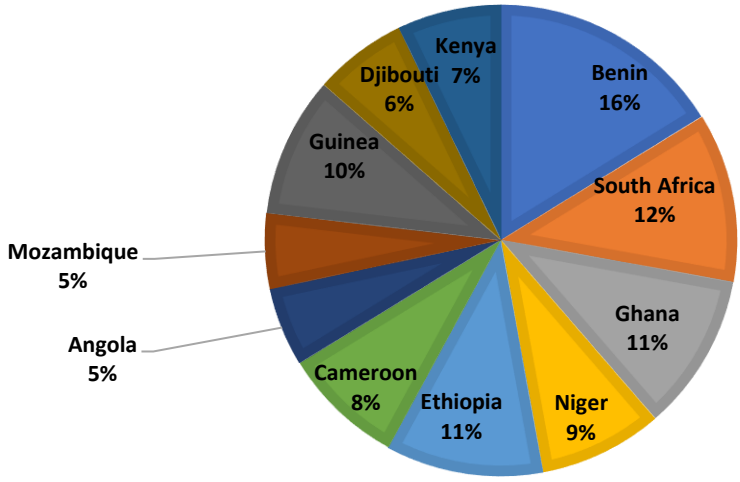


Figure 17: *Africa's leading rice importer percentage share (Average 2018 - 2022).* ***Source:*** *ITC (2025)*

EXPORT: As indicated in **Figure 18**, Africa's rice export trend experienced fluctuations between 2018 and 2022. A steady increase was observed from 2018 to 2021, followed by a sharp decline from 2021 to 2022. The highest export value at US$765.6 million (N$14.9 billion) was recorded in 2021, while the lowest at US$213.9 million (N$4.2 billion) occurred in 2018.

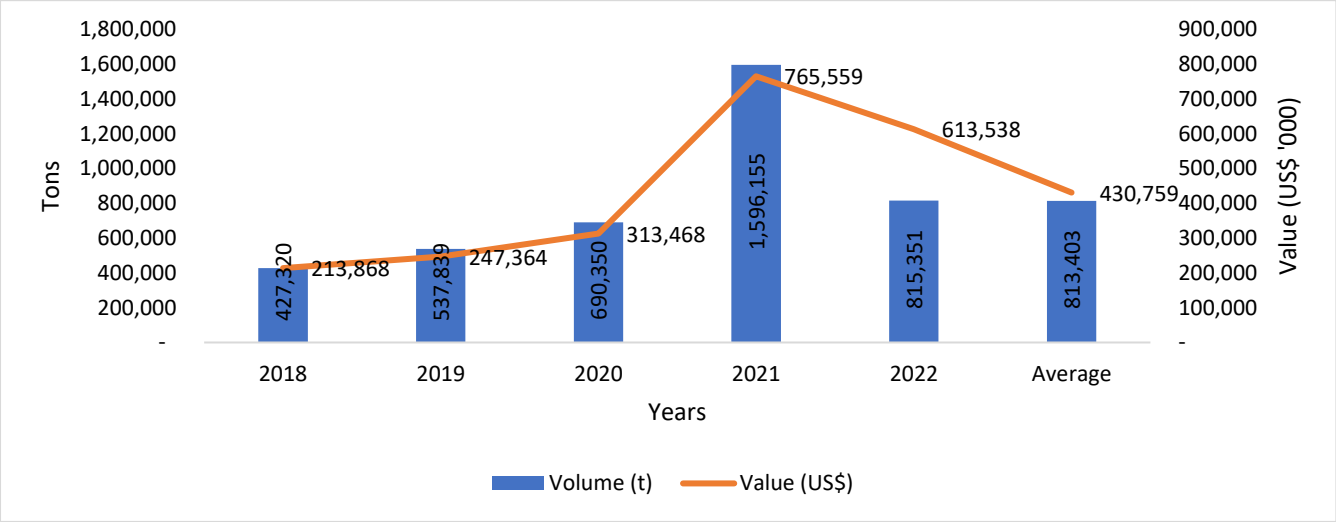


Figure 18: *Rice export trends in Africa – volume & value (Average 2018 - 2022)*

Source: *ITC (2025) (**Conversion date:** 08.04.2025)*

Djibouti stands as Africa's top rice exporter, averaging US$255 million (N$4.9 billion) in export value. It is followed by Tanzania, which recorded an average of US$136.9 million (N$2.7 billion). South Africa also has a well-developed rice export sector, with an export value of US$123.3 million (N$2.4 billion), though this is slightly below Tanzania's figures (International Trade Administration, 2024). In contrast, the export values of other African countries are considerably lower. Senegal ranks fourth with US$77.2 million (N$1.5 billion), while Rwanda and Uganda each registered an average of US$15.7 million (N$306.4 million). These figures highlight the relatively smaller scale of rice exports in countries outside the top three exporters, as shown in **Figure 19** below.

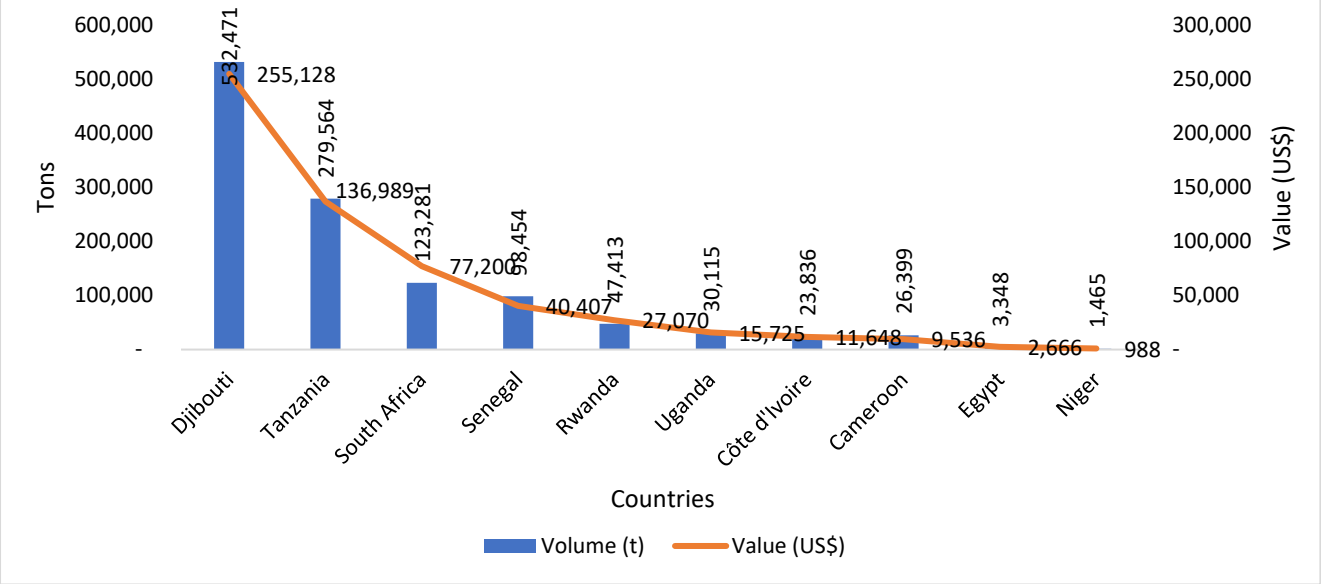


Figure 19: *The top ten leading rice exporters in Africa, ranked by export value (Average 2018 – 2020)*
Source: *ITC (2025)*

PRICES: In Africa, rice prices in 2018 and 2019 were lower compared to the subsequent years. The lowest price was recorded in 2018 at US$552.22 (N$10,399.60) per ton, likely influenced by market conditions or disruptions in the supply chain. Prices then recovered, reaching a peak of US$589.73 (N$11,106.00) per ton in 2021 before experiencing a slight decrease to US$584.90 (N$11,015.04) per ton in 2022. The average producer price over the five years was US$570.29 (N$10,739.90) per ton, indicating an overall upward trend, particularly after the decline in 2019 **(Figure 20)**.

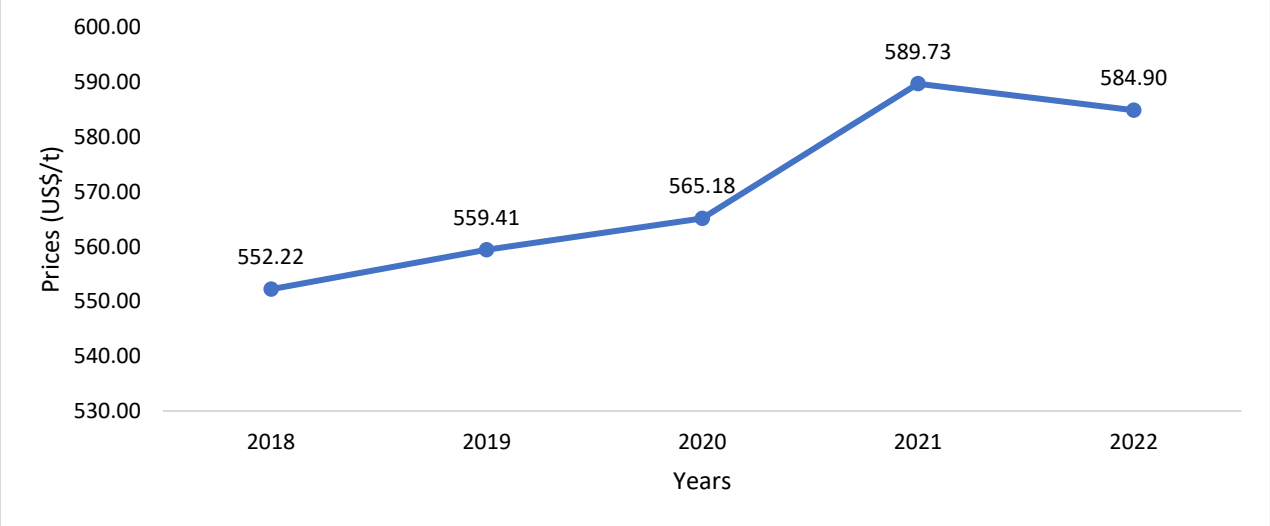


Figure 20: *Average rice prices in Africa from 2018 to 2022* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

CONSUMPTION: According to the World Population Review (2025), on average, Africa consumes 43,468,333 tons of rice per annum. In 2021, the highest rice consumption volume of 46,554,000 tons was recorded, and the lowest volume of 41,419,000 tons was recorded in 2019 **(Figure 21).**

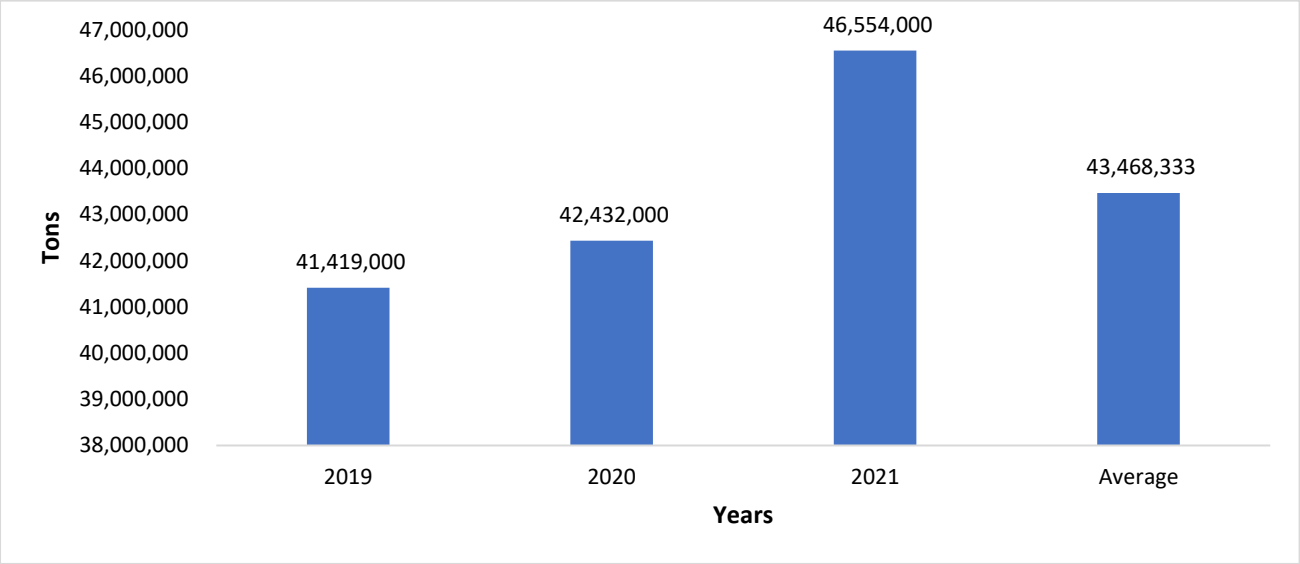


Figure 21: *Rice consumption trend in Africa (Average 2019 -2021).*

Source: *World Population Review (2025)*

Nigeria, Egypt, and Madagascar are the top rice consumers in Africa. Nigeria leads with 7,415,666.6 tons (26%), followed by Egypt at 4,936,666.6 tons (17%) and Madagascar at 3,989,333.3 tons (14%). Together, these three nations account for 57% of Africa's total rice consumption, making them the largest consumers on the continent.

Many key rice-consuming countries are in West Africa, such as Nigeria (7,415,666.6 tons, 26%), Guinea (2,169,000 tons, 7%), Ghana (1,919,666.6 tons, 7%), and Senegal (1,894,333.3 tons, 6%), thus underscoring the importance of rice in the region's diet. Tanzania (2,216,333.3 tons, 8%) is a significant consumer in East Africa, while Madagascar remains a major player in Southern Africa (**Figure 22** below).

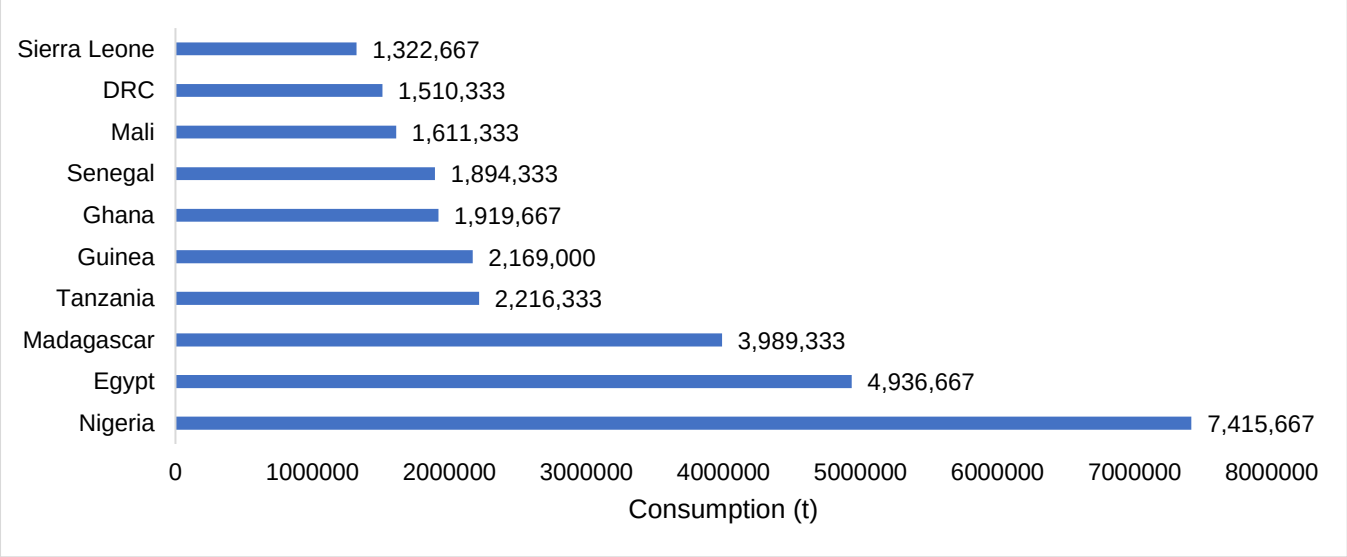


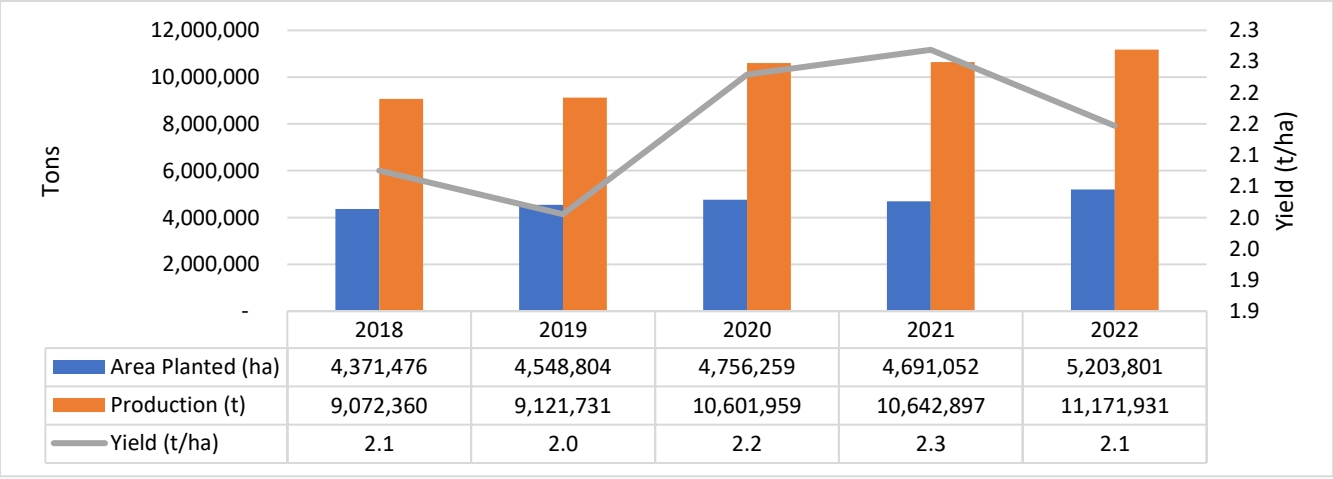
Figure 22: *Top ten rice-consuming countries in Africa (Average 2019 - 2021)*

Source: *World Population Review (2024)*

4. SADC PERSPECTIVE

This section offers insights into rice production, trade (imports and exports), price and consumption in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

PRODUCTION: As shown in **Figure 23**, in SADC, a slightly increasing trend was again observed in annual rice production, increasing from 9 million tons in 2018 to 11 million tons in 2022.



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Area Planted (ha)	4,371,476	4,548,804	4,756,259	4,691,052	5,203,801
Production (t)	9,072,360	9,121,731	10,601,959	10,642,897	11,171,931
Yield (t/ha)	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.1

Figure 23: *Rice production trend in SADC* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2022)*

As illustrated in **Figures 24** and **25**, Madagascar and Tanzania are the top rice producers in the SADC region, with average outputs of 4.6 million tons and 4 million tons, respectively. They are followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which produces around 1.6 million tons annually. Countries like Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia have moderate production levels, ranging between 54,000 and 220,000 tons. In contrast, Angola, South Africa, Eswatini, and Zimbabwe reported the lowest rice yields. This highlights that rice cultivation in other SADC member states, including Namibia, is still underdeveloped, leading to a significant dependence on imports to meet domestic demand.

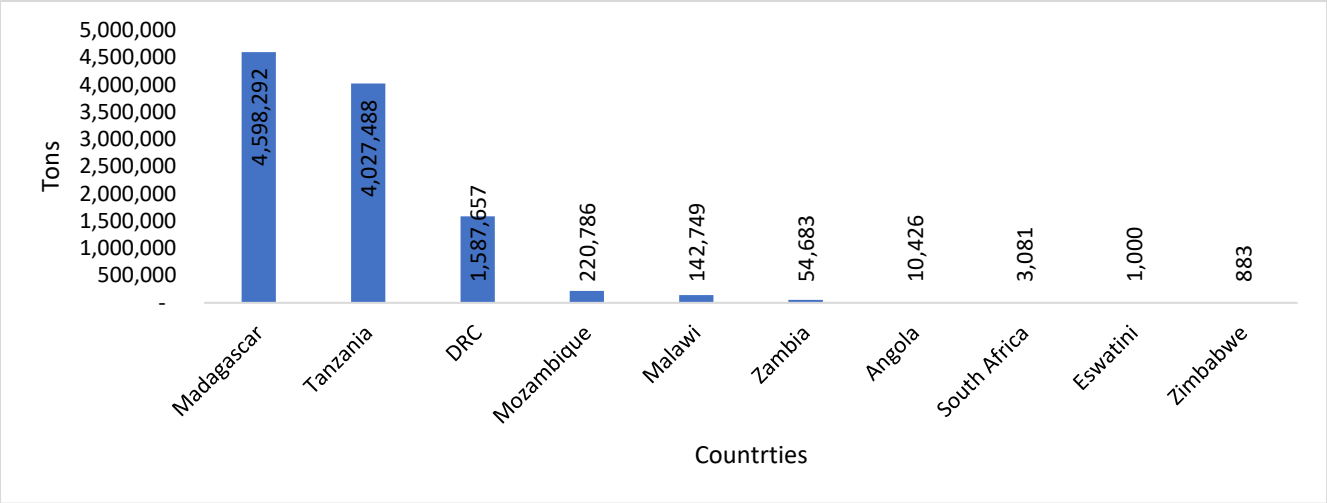


Figure 24: *Top Rice producers in SADC 2018 - 2022* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2025)*

Figure 25 shows that Madagascar accounts for the largest share of rice production in the SADC region at 43%, followed by Tanzania with 38% and the DRC with 15%. The remaining countries each contribute less than 2% to the total production.

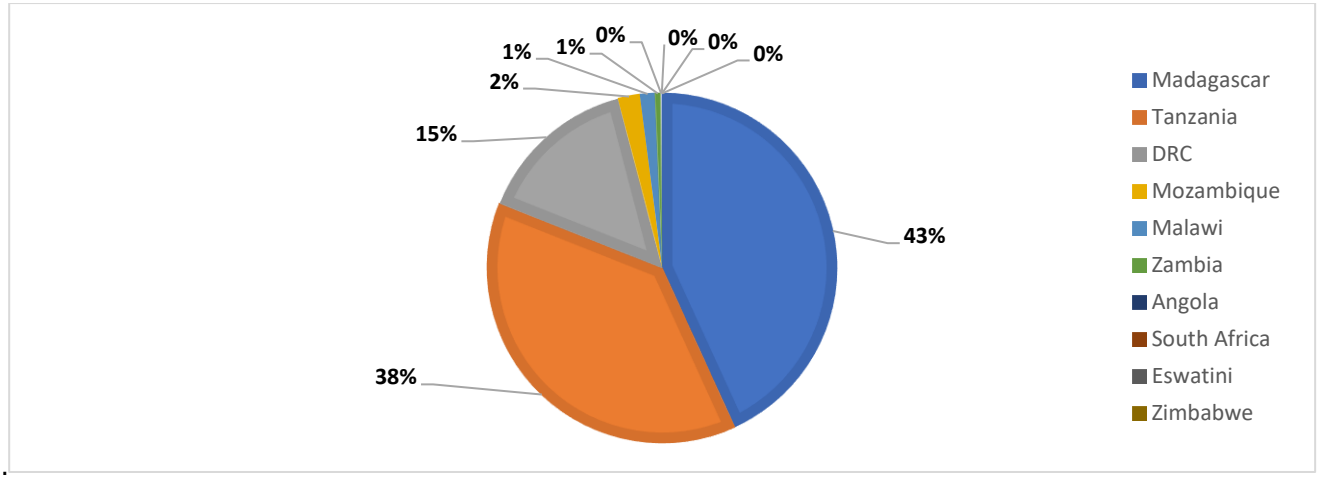


Figure 25: *Rice production percentage share across SADC* ***Source:*** *FAOSTAT (2025)*

IMPORTS: Figure 26 shows the rice import volume and value for SADC from 2018 to 2022. On average, SADC spends US$160.7 million (N$ 3.1 billion) annually on rice imports, with the highest value of US$183.5 million (N$35.7 billion) in 2022 and the lowest, US$ 1.3 million (N$ 2.6 billion) in 2019. The highest import volumes were recorded in 2021 (3.3 million tons), 2022 (3.5 million tons), and the lowest was recorded in 2019 (2.7 million tons).

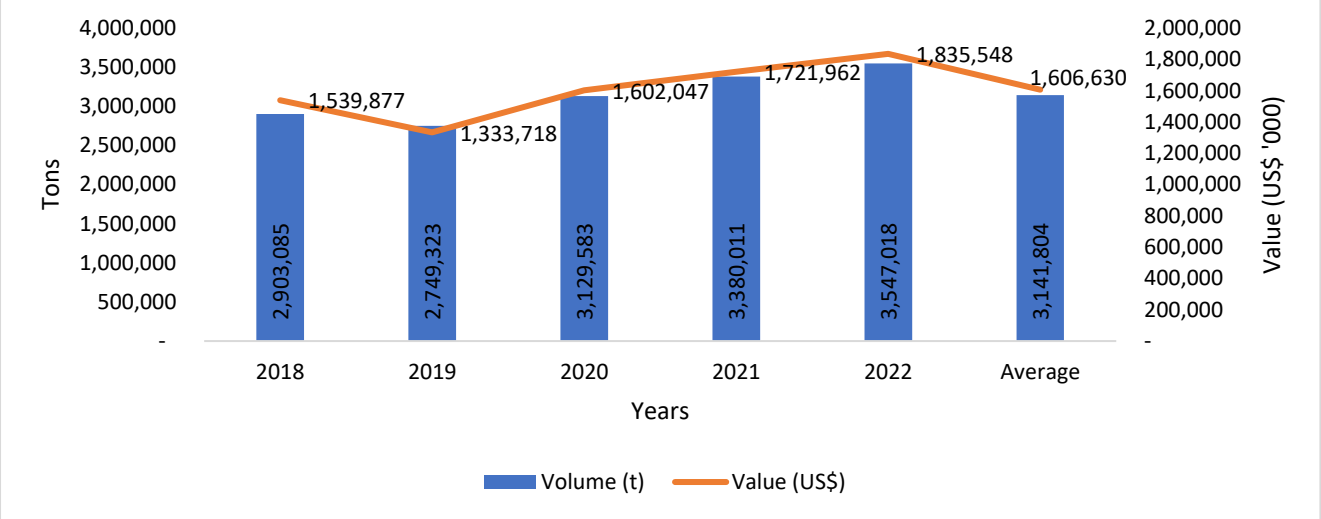


Figure 26: *SADC import trends over five years* ***Source:*** *ITC (2025)*

Figure 27 below illustrates the leading rice-importing countries within the SADC region, measured by volume and value between 2018 and 2022. South Africa stands as the top importer, importing 1.0 million tons of rice valued at US$500.4 million (N$9.8 billion). Angola follows as the second-largest importer, with 475,756 tons worth US$302.4 million (N$5.9 billion). Mozambique ranks third, importing 452,016 tons of rice valued at US$281.3 million (N$5.5 billion). Meanwhile, Madagascar and Zimbabwe imported 572,656 tons and 175,867 tons of rice, respectively, with corresponding values of US$232 million (N$4.5 billion) and US$110.8 million (N$2.2 billion). These figures, as depicted in **Figure 27** below, highlight the significant demand for rice across the region, particularly in South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique.

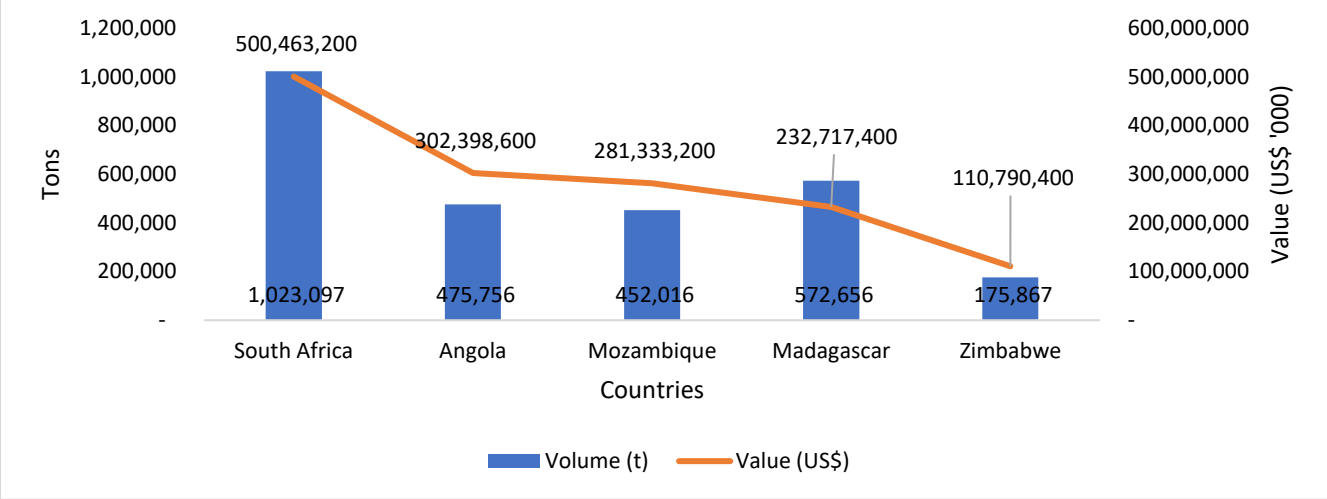


Figure 27: *The top five leading rice importers in SADC, ranked by import value (Average 2018 - 2022).*
Source: *ITC (2025) (**Conversion date:** 08.04.2025)*

South Africa dominated rice imports within the SADC region, accounting for 38% of the total, thereby positioning itself as the largest importer. Madagascar followed with a 21% share, while Angola contributed 18% to the region's rice imports. Mozambique was close behind at 17%, and Zimbabwe accounted for 6%. These figures, as illustrated in Figure 28, reflect the varying levels of rice demand across the region, with South Africa leading by a significant margin **(Figure 28).**

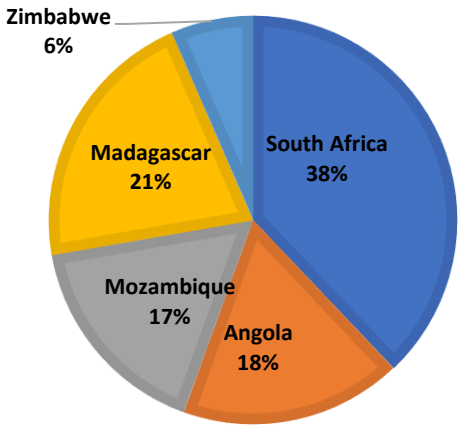


Figure 28: *SADC leading rice importer percentage share (Average 2018 - 2022)*
Source: *ITC (2025)*

EXPORTS: Figure 29 shows rice export trends in SADC from 2018 to 2022. Over these five years, the region recorded an average export volume of 356,881 tons and an average export value of US$215.6 million (N$4.2 billion), indicating substantial trade activity despite some year-on-year fluctuations. Export volumes demonstrated a steady upward trend, rising from 158,114 tons in 2018 to a peak of 748,547 tons in 2021, highlighting remarkable growth. Export values reflected this pattern, reaching the highest point in 2021 at US$386 million (N$7.5 billion). However, in 2022, export volumes and values declined significantly, with volumes dropping to 158,086 tons and values falling to US$279.9 million (N$5.5 billion), thus reflecting a notable contraction in trade.

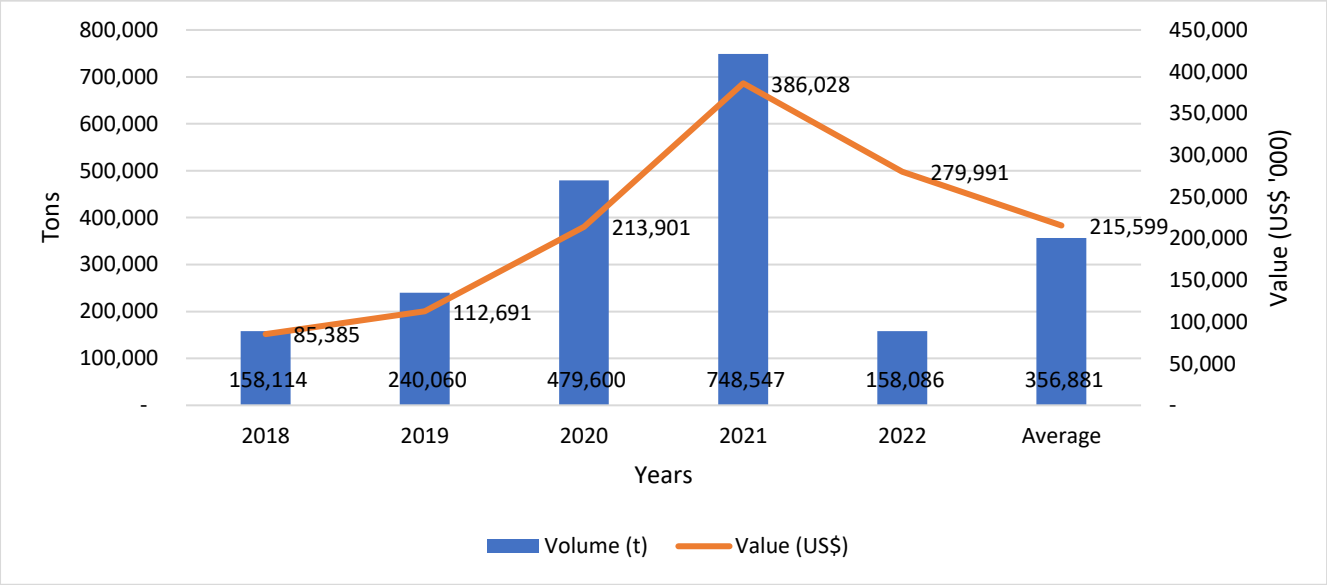


Figure 29: *Rice export trends in SADC (Average 2018 - 2022)*
Source: *ITC (2025).* (***Conversion date:*** *08.04.2025)*

Tanzania stands out as the leading rice exporter among SADC countries, with exports valued at US$ 136 million (N$2.7 billion). South Africa ranks as the second-largest exporter in SADC, and it recorded a value of US$ 77.2 million (N$1.5 million). This significant figure likely indicates that South Africa is largely involved in re-exports, as its export volumes surpass its local production capacity, as shown in **Figure 24**. Botswana ranks third, with rice exports valued at US$511,600 (N$9.9 million). In comparison, other SADC countries reported relatively low export volumes, contributing only marginally to the region's total rice export output, as illustrated in **Figure 30** below.

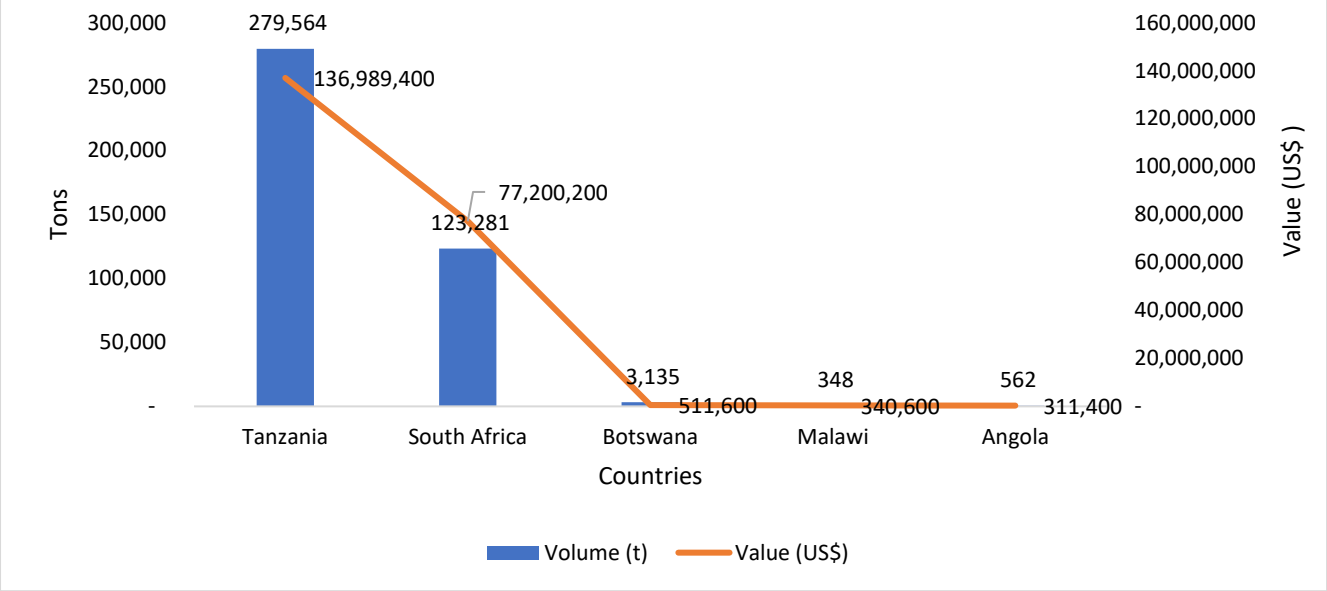


Figure 30: *The top five leading rice exporters in SADC, ranked by export value (Average 2018 -2022)*
Source: *ITC (2025) (**Conversion date:** 08.04.2025)*

Rice exports within SADC are heavily concentrated in a few member states. Tanzania holds an impressive lead, accounting for 69% of the region's total rice exports, while South Africa contributes 30%. In contrast, Botswana, Malawi, and Angola each represent a marginal share of 1% or less, highlighting their limited role in the regional rice export market **(Figure 31).**

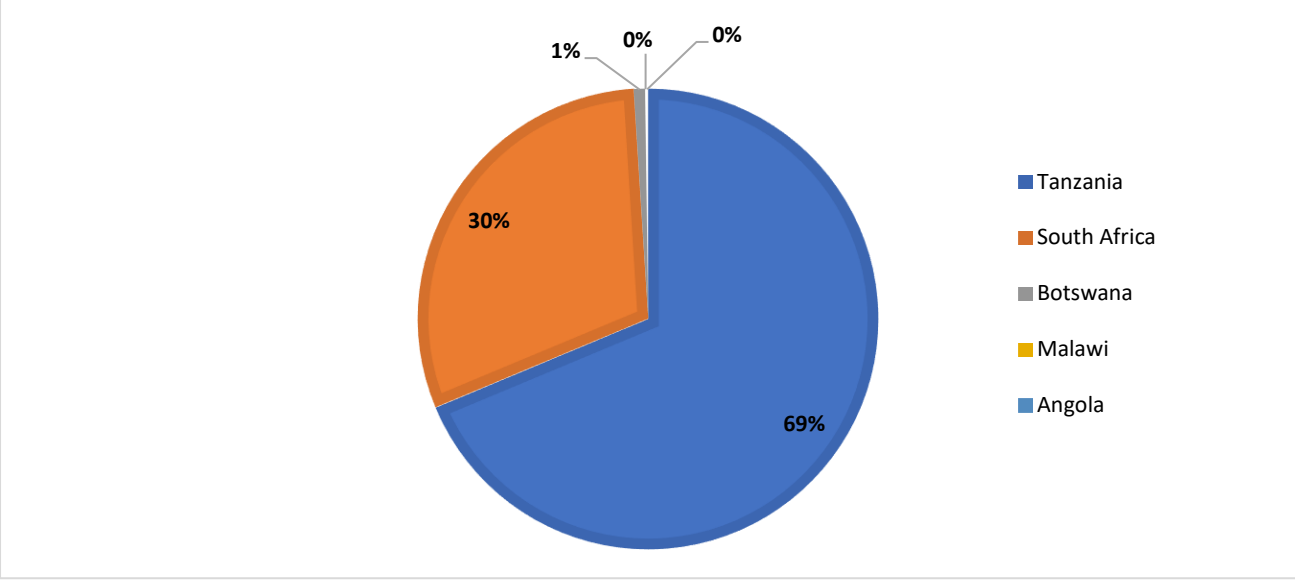


***Figure 31*:** SADC leading rice exporter percentage share (Average 2018 - 2022) **Source:** ITC (2025)

PRICES: Rice prices in SADC countries have shown variability between 2018 and 2023, influenced by weather patterns, global market dynamics, and domestic economic policies (Ouko & Odiwuor, 2023). However, specific rice price data for SADC countries were not available during the reporting period.

CONSUMPTION: As depicted in **Figure 32**, on average, SADC consumes 12.8 million tons of rice annually. In 2022, the highest rice consumption volume of 14.4 million tons was recorded, and the lowest volume of 11.6 million tons was recorded in 2019, which is a decreasing trend as displayed in **Figure 32**.

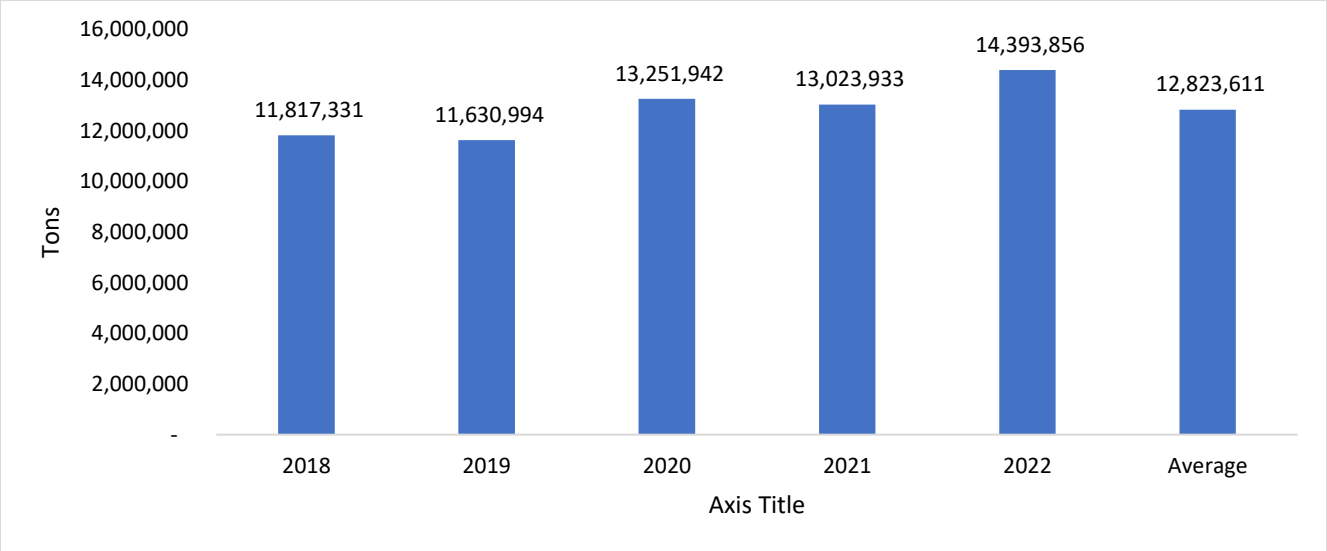


Figure 32: *Rice consumption trend in SADC*

(Note: ** Rice Consumption = Prodution + Imports – Exports**)**

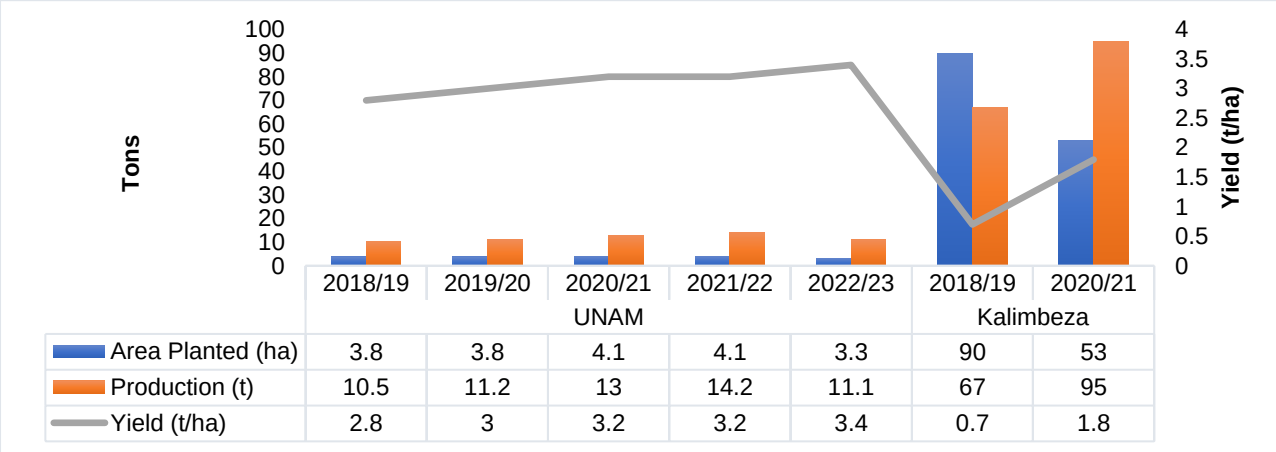
5. DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVE

This section covers domestic production, trade (import and export), and the price and consumption of rice in Namibia.

PRODUCTION: Namibia heavily relies on rice imports, as domestic production remains extremely low to negligible. Currently, rice cultivation takes place at Kalimbeza in the Zambezi region, at the University of Namibia's (UNAM) Ogongo Campus, and also among small-scale farmers in the Omusati region. However, locally grown rice has not yet gained widespread market recognition (Togarepi et al., 2023).

Figure 32 below presents rice production volumes for UNAM over five cropping seasons (2018/19 to 2022/23) and for Kalimbeza over two cropping seasons (2018/19 and 2020/21). At UNAM, rice production displayed a steady upward trend, increasing from 10.5 tons in 2018/19 to a peak of 14.2 tons

in 2021/22 before experiencing a decline to 11.1 tons in 2022/23. In contrast, Kalimbeza showed a significant rise in rice production from 67 tons in 2018/19 to 95 tons in 2020/21. These figures illustrate a consistent growth in production at both sites, with Kalimbeza achieving a notable increase within the two reported seasons.



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2018/19	2020/21
	UNAM					Kalimbeza	
Area Planted (ha)	3.8	3.8	4.1	4.1	3.3	90	53
Production (t)	10.5	11.2	13	14.2	11.1	67	95
Yield (t/ha)	2.8	3	3.2	3.2	3.4	0.7	1.8

Figure 33: *Domestic rice production trend by institution (2018/19 - 2022/23)* ***Source:*** *UNAM (2024)*

IMPORTS

Figure 34 shows the trends in Namibia's annual rice import tonnage and value from 2019 to 2022. Notably, 2022 marked a significant peak, with the import volume reaching its highest at 28,317 tons. Correspondingly, the import value soared to N$ 314.1 million, reflecting both the increased volume and possibly higher market prices, thus highlighting a remarkable deviation from the preceding years.

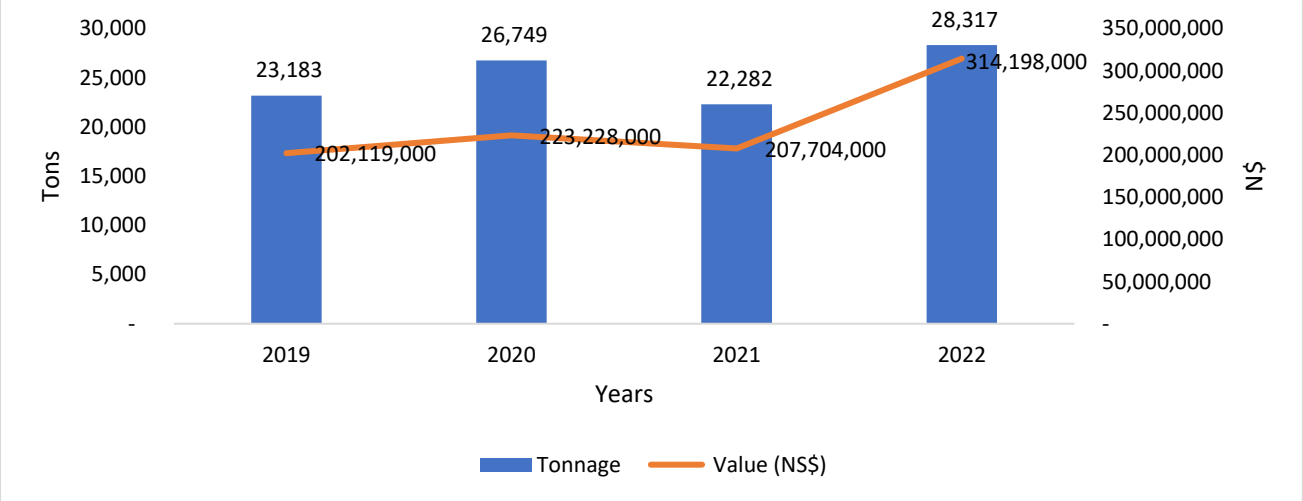


Figure 34: *Domestic rice import trends in volume and value (Average 2019 - 2022)*

Source: *NAB (2025)*

RE-EXPORT

Figure 35 presents Namibia's domestic rice re-exports by country in 2022. Zambia appeared as the leading recipient, receiving 7.75 tons of rice valued at US$4.8 million. Smaller quantities were also re-exported to Angola, Norway, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Notably, South Africa received just 0.001 tons of rice during this period. This data emphasises Zambia's dominant role in Namibia's rice re-export trade.

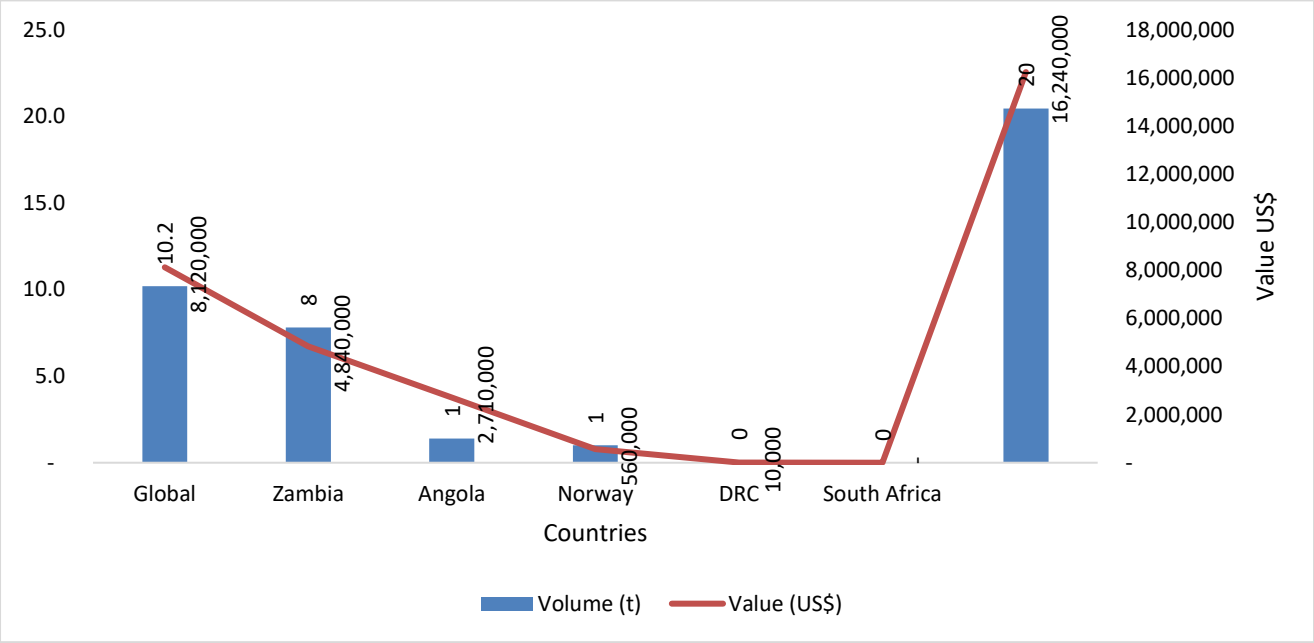


Figure 35: *Domestic rice re-export by country in 2022.* ***Source:*** *World Integrated Trade Solution (2022)*

PRICES: According to OEC.World (2022), the producer prices for rice in Namibia are influenced by local agricultural conditions and the country's reliance on imports. Namibia imports most of its rice primarily from South Africa, China, and Thailand.

Although specific annual producer price data for rice in Namibia is limited, the rice retail price fluctuated significantly due to global market trends, import costs, and local demand. As of recent data in 2023, the retail prices for rice in Namibia ranged between US$ 3.20 (N$56.09) and US$ 9.61 (N$ 168.28) per kilogram, depending on location and variety.

CONSUMPTION: Namibia's rice consumption primarily relies on imports. Despite the country's relatively small population, rice consumption remains high, with only minimal local production emerging (Togarepi et al., 2023). Between 2018 and 2022, Namibia recorded an average annual rice consumption of 26,667 tons, as shown in **Figure 36** below.

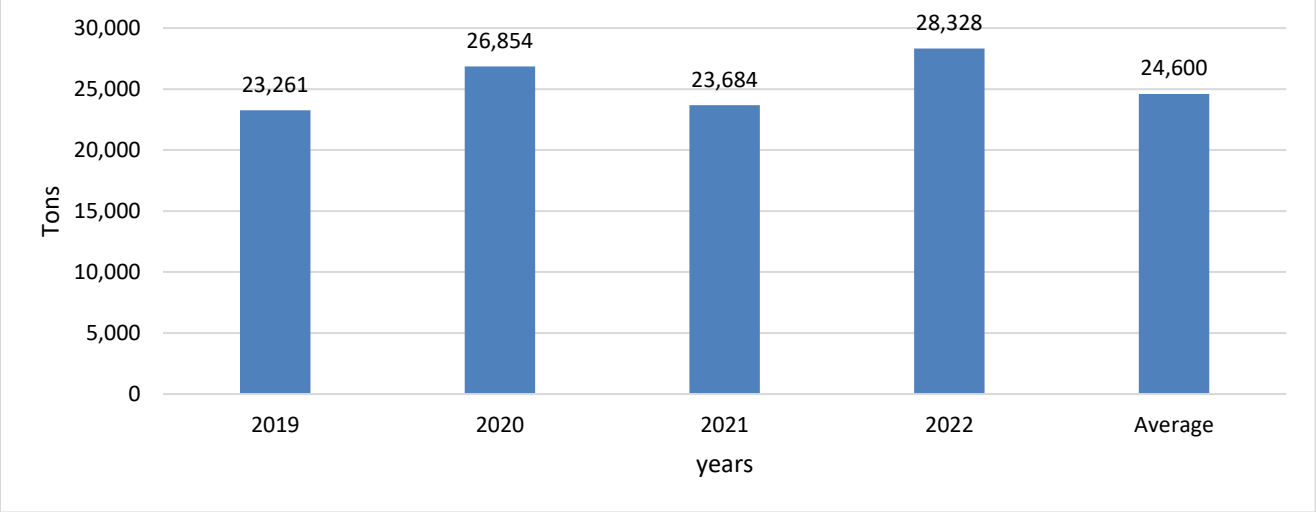


Figure 36: *Rice consumption trend in Namibia (Average 2019 – 2021)*

(Note: * *Rice Consumption = Prodution + Imports – Exports**)***

6. KEY POTENTIALS TO UNLOCK GROWTH IN RICE PRODUCTION AND MARKET

The growing importation of rice into Namibia to meet local demand offers a significant opportunity for local producers and traders to supply the domestic market. There is a pressing need to introduce large-scale rice production in Namibia to address the increasing demand, targeting the Zambezi, Kavango, and North Central production zones, which have ample water resources. Developing local rice production would create market opportunities for Namibian farmers and enhance the country's self-sufficiency in grain production, thus reducing its dependency on rice imports.

Both global and African rice consumption are on the rise, with global demand exceeding 520 million metric tons annually. This upward trend presents a chance for Namibian producers to expand rice cultivation and tap into regional and international markets. Doing so would strengthen Namibia's agricultural sector, improve food security, and contribute to the global rice supply chain.

Rice cultivation in Namibia has the potential to become a major source of income and job creation, particularly at the household level and across the country. Increased rice production could significantly benefit Namibian farmers and traders in the developing world, offering them more opportunities to grow their businesses.

To fully seize these opportunities, it is essential to establish a comprehensive information and knowledge base on global, continental, and regional rice production and marketing trends. This can provide valuable insights to Namibian stakeholders, thereby improve local rice production and marketing, and contribute to the country's agricultural growth and food security.

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