

South African industry responds to Port of Cape Town's lowly ranking

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 19 June 2026

South Africa's fresh fruit export organisations have expressed strategic concerns after Cape Town port was ranked last globally



Image: Adobe Stock

In South Africa, the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF), Hortgro and the SA Table Grape Industry (Sati) have noted [the release of the World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence Container Port Performance Index \(CPPI\) 2025](#), which again placed the Port of Cape Town as the lowest-ranked container port globally.

A joint statement pointed out that while the rankings related to South African ports were “disappointing”, it was important to recognise that several ports recorded significant improvements

during the reporting period.

Durban was identified as the most improved port globally compared with 2024, despite remaining at number 398 out of 400 ports listed.

Ngqura (Coega) at number 380, and Port Elizabeth at number 314 also featured prominently among the world's most-improved facilities.

"This demonstrates that progress is possible and that focused interventions can deliver meaningful results" the organisations commented.

"For the fresh fruit export industry, however, Cape Town's performance remains a strategic concern and continues to pose a significant risk to the sector's future viability and growth."

The port serves as South Africa's primary export gateway for deciduous fruit, citrus and other agricultural products destined for international markets.

Roughly 80 per cent of deciduous fruit exports from South Africa are shipped from the Port of Cape Town.

"The fruit industry supports approximately 320,000 jobs, accounting for around 35 per cent of agricultural employment and 2 per cent of total employment in South Africa," FPEF chief executive Piet de Jager pointed out.

"Ongoing inefficiencies at Cape Town and other ports are driving up costs, eroding competitiveness and putting these jobs at risk."



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The statement revealed that In the 2025/26 deciduous fruit export season, logistics-related inefficiencies cost table grape producers about R3.2bn, and stonefruit growers R1.05bn in lost revenue and additional costs.

FPEF, Hortgro and Sati acknowledged the efforts undertaken by Transnet Port Terminals and Transnet National Ports Authority over the past year to maintain, upgrade and replace equipment, but said operational performance remained "at a low and unacceptable level".

"We appreciate the ongoing and constructive engagement between Transnet and industry stakeholders as we work together to address longstanding challenges, but we need to see and experience productivity improvements," said De Jager.

The organisations confirmed they remain committed to collaborating with Transnet, government and industry partners to support practical, public and private-sector interventions that improve port performance and strengthen South Africa's export competitiveness.

"The improvement seen at other South African ports offers encouragement that progress is achievable," added De Jager.

"The challenge now is to translate those gains into consistent, measurable improvements in Cape Town, ensuring that the country's most important gateway for agricultural exports can support growth, job creation, economic development and the safeguarding of rural livelihoods."

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