Does the WTO still enjoy priority?"

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INTRODUCTION

• The development of the WTO

• The development of Regional and bilateral Agreements
Evolution of Regional Trade Agreements in the world 1948-2002 Number of RTAs (source website of the WTO)
Chart 1: RTAs in force and under negotiation as of July 2000, by type of RTA

Source: WT/REG/W/41 - October 2000
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REASONS FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT

• The increase of WTO members

• The Multilateral Trade Negotiation

• The Dispute Settlement Body

• The increase of topics

• The weakness of Article XXIV
CONSEQUENCES

• **Positive aspects**
  - RTAs force others to the multilateral negotiation table
  - RTAs limit the number of players
  - RTAs can lead to open global trade
  - RTAs …
CONSEQUENCES

• **Negative aspects**
  - RTAs lead to the end of multilateralism
  - RTAs are discriminating
  - Every RTAs is different
  - RTAs are developing exponentially
  - RTAs = Spaghetti bowl phenomenon
Map 1: Cross Regional RTAs recently concluded or under negotiation (2003)

Source: Presentation done by the Trade Policies Review Division (WTO)
SOLUTIONS

• More bilateral / Regional developments

• More WTO
  - Structural changes
  - Transparency
CONCLUSIONS

• **Question:** Does the WTO still enjoy priority?

• **Answer:** Two questions:
  For whom?
  and
  which WTO?