



**OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS:
AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF CHALLENGES ,
FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR
CUSTOMS**

by

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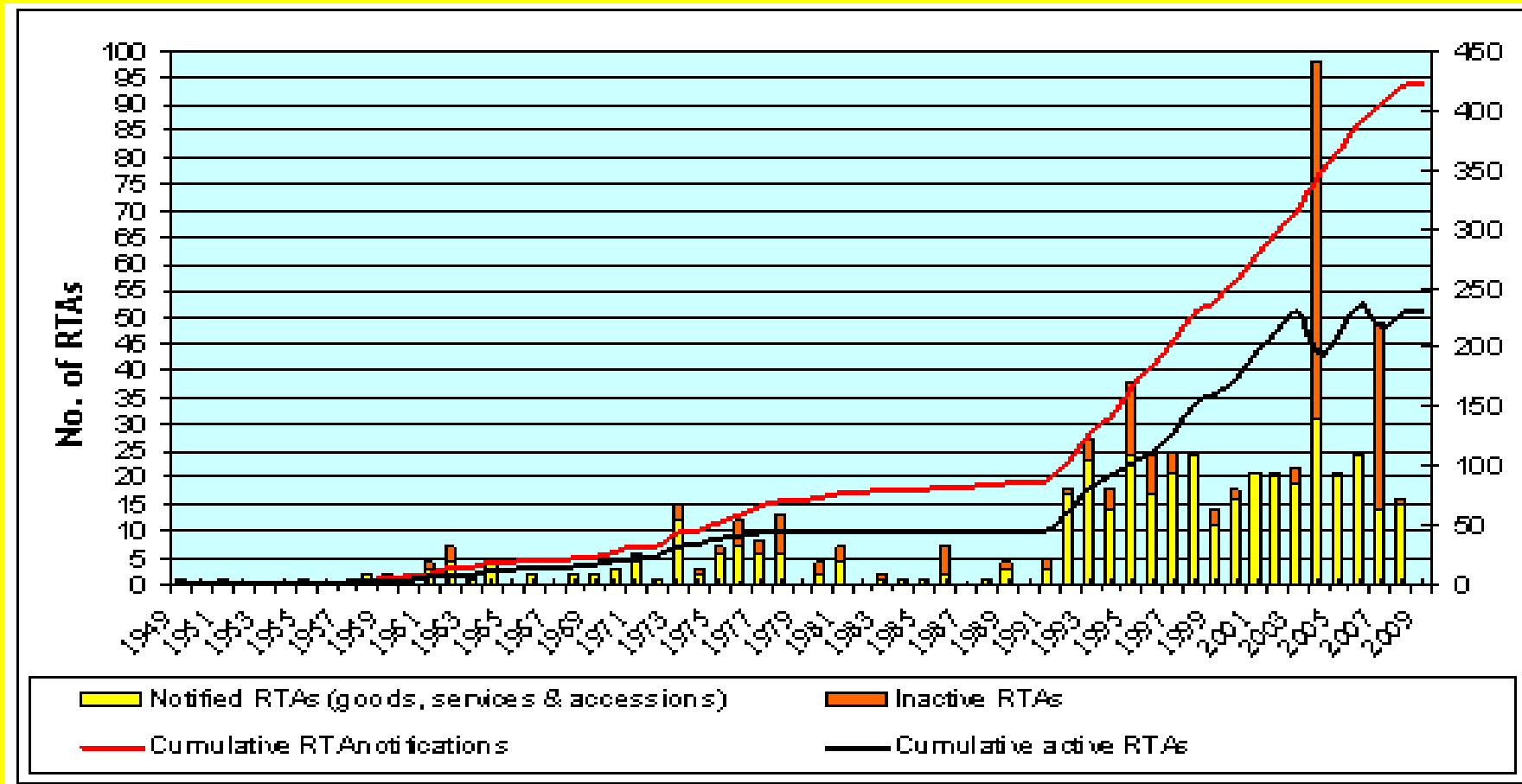
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Introduction



- **124 RTAs btm 1948-1994**
- **300 RTAs btm 1995-2008**

Introduction



- **In Africa, RTAs are championed by RECs**
- **14 RECs, 8 recognized by AU, (SADC, EAC, COMESA, ECCAS, IGAD, AMU, ECOWAS, CEN-SAD)**
- **Each REC has an RTA in the form of a FTA or CU**
- **Characteristics of RECs in Africa**
 - **Variable Geometry**
 - **Statistics of Multiplicity**
 - **Multi prong approach to RI**

Nature of RTAs



- **RTAs can either be Trade Creating or Diverting**
- **Trade Creating RTAs has more bearing on Customs due to increase in both flow and volume of trade**
- **A growing body of literature confirming Trade Creation in African RTAs (see for example Cernat, 2001)**
- **Increase in both Trade flow and volume can complicate the traditional role of Customs**

Challenges of RTAs to Customs Administrations



- **Capacity Building**
- **Multiplicity of Membership**
- **Customs Ethics and Integrity**
- **Alteration of the Resource and Incentive Structure**
- **Increase in the Cost of Customs Administration**

RTAs and Future Customs Policies and Strategies



- **RTAs, a good opportunity for Customs to refocus so as to continue to be relevant**
- **The WCO C21 document, offering a good starting point**
- **CAs in Africa need to emphasize on adaptation on top of adoption of Intl standards**

RTAs and Future Customs Policies and Strategies



- **Future policies will need to focus on:-**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Addressing Resource Constraints**
- **Legal based reforms that will allow use of modern advances in technology and operations**
- **Enhancement of inter Agency cooperation**
- **Issues of integrity**
- **Customs Trade related infrastructure**

Conclusion



This paper has attempted to illustrate that :

- **RTAs have brought enormous challenges for Customs in Africa**
- **There is still policy space for customs**

As a way forward Customs

- **Need to be part and parcel of RTA negotiating teams (where this is not already the case)**
- **Need to follow closely and analyse trade developments at national, regional and global levels so as to avoid fire fighting solutions.**



THANK YOU

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