

## **Abstract**

The Dispute settlement system of the World Trade Organization is in a crisis. The demise of the Appellate Body signals tough times for the multilateral trading system. The Appellate Body is now devoid of its adjudicators, their appointment blocked by the US. The celebrated system of dispute resolution has been crippled. Evolving since the second world war it saw many iterations. The first goal of this thesis is to explore the nature of the different dispute settlement regimes of the ITO, the GATT and the WTO and determine whether they constitute a judicial or a diplomatic system. The second goal of this thesis is to analyze the Appellate Body crisis. With no resolution in sight, a group of members agreed to sign the Multi-party Interim Appeals Arrangement (MPIA), resorting to arbitration in place of the non-functioning Appellate Body. The US has raised numerous objections to the practice of the Appellate Body and the thesis shall touch upon a number of them with a thorough discussion, mainly on the extent of its authority and the limits of its functioning. The thesis will examine the criticism of the US, counterarguments and whether the MPIA rectifies any of the perceived shortcomings.

**Key Words:** Multilateral Trading System, the World Trade Organization, the Appellate Body, the MPIA, dispute settlement system