



Sustainable Development in International Law Making and Trade: International Food Governance and Trade in Agriculture

Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi

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'This book provides a magisterial account of the history, conceptualization, and institutionalization of the concept of sustainable development in international law and policy-making. It provides helpful and insightful illumination of these issues, both at a general level and specifically through an extended case study of the evolution of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture - a particularly appropriate choice of case study given that agriculture implicates a wide range of divergent values, including the economic benefits of free trade; promoting access to affordable food; protecting small subsistence farmers, especially in developing countries; and minimizing environmental degradation through over-exploitation of natural resources such as fisheries, soil depletion or contamination. An overarching and constructive theme of the book is the need for greater legal coherence in international law making across these various domains which are often fragmented in institutional silos that lack effective integrating mechanisms.'

- Michael Trebilcock, University of Toronto, Canada

'Sustainable development, now made fully operational thanks to the contribution of Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi, can support policy reforms that will improve global governance, thus ensuring that the trade regime is shaped to support the policy objectives that it is meant to serve. The area of food and agriculture is in many ways a case study of a lack of consistency across policy areas. It is now high time to overcome this failure. I have no doubt that this volume represents a major contribution towards this end.'

- Olivier De Schutter, Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The concept of sustainable development has become a fundamental discourse in international decision making. To enable pragmatic sustainable development governance, legally coherent, mutually supportive multilateral treaties are both necessary and important. This timely book provides an accessible insight into how the concept of sustainable development can be made operational for coherent law making through its translation into legal terms.

The book is split into two informative points of inquiry. The first part of the book explores the origins of the sustainable development debate and sheds light on how the international community has inadequately operationalized the concept to utilize its full potential. In this view, Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi illustrates how sustainable development can facilitate coherent international law making when it is understood as a multidimensional legal principle and methodical norm. The second part of the book adopts this notion as an analytical lens on the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, placing the focus specifically on food security and food sustainability. The overarching discussion contributes to one of the most intricate debates of international food governance and investigates the unresolved question of what a sustainable and coherent agricultural trade agreement could look like.

Providing a comprehensive overview of sustainable development law, its origins, and its current theories, scholars and students with a background in international public law, trade, and investment law, development and human rights law, international relations, and environmental policy will find this book a valuable reference tool. Practitioners and policy-makers will benefit from the insight into the search for politically coherent and sustainable legal agreements.

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