Foreword

Water takes a key place in human, animal and plant life. Without sufficient supplies and careful management, major threats to biological life on the planet result. Water management thus ever since has been of key importance in domestic law and policy. Transboundary water problems have extended the importance to the field of international law. Water law has been an important subject mainly in relation to equitable and sustainable allocation of water resources among nations. It emerged as an important subject in international environmental law. The present book extends the analysis to international trade law in the wake of globalisation and market integration. With climate change and population growths, new challenges emerge and mutual dependence of water supplies and management increases. The studies cover three essential issues: Firstly, to what extent bulk water falls under WTO law and its disciplines in trading the resource. Secondly, it addresses the problem of irrigation subsidies under the Agreement on Agriculture. And thirdly, the book turns to the new topic of virtual water trade, i.e. the incorporation of water in internationally traded goods. To what extent should the water footprint be taken into account or not in regulating international trade of agricultural products and processed food? These issues are informed by economic and human needs, the right to water and the goals of sustainable development. The book draws upon a wealth of materials related to the subject and offers a careful and well-reasoned introduction and analysis of a new and largely uncharted subject of international trade law, exploring the potential and limits of addressing the use of water resources in the context of WTO law. The book substantially advances the subject of interfacing trade, human rights and environmental concerns under the umbrella of sustainable development.

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