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International law and the sustainable governance of shared natural resources: A principled approach

Sánchez Castillo, N.N.A.

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Author: Sánchez Castillo, N.N.A.

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International environmental treaties and soft law instruments stress international cooperation as a fundamental principle in the governance of natural resources shared by two or more states. However, tensions between national interests and the common interests of the states sharing natural resources can make it difficult for states to cooperate. Meanwhile, the sustainable management of the resource in question and the human rights of the populations involved can be affected.

This book examines principles of international law applicable to the governance of resources that are significant to the world's population, that have the potential to be a source of conflict, and whose governance presents problematic aspects. The selected principles are sovereignty, community of interests, common concern of humankind, public participation and sustainable development. The first two chapters focus on transboundary fresh-water resources, underground and surface waters respectively. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 focus on the atmosphere, addressing atmospheric degradation and climate change respectively. Chapter 5 focuses on marine resources beyond national jurisdiction or 'ocean global commons'.

Each chapter identifies problems concerning the selected principles and their application to shared resource governance, puts forward original and cogent arguments to address these problems, and suggests ways in which the principles could contribute to the sustainable governance of shared natural resources.

This is a volume in the series of the Meijers Research Institute and Graduate School of the Leiden Law School of Leiden University. This study is part of the Law School's research programme 'Exploring the Frontiers of International Law'.

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N.N.A. SÁNCHEZ CASTILLO-WINCKELS

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