



The International Law on **Foreign Investment**

Third Edition

M. Sornarajah

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THE INTERNATIONAL LAW ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT

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Preface to the third edition

Since the second edition of this book, the international law on foreign investment has witnessed such enormous activity that a new edition is justified within five years. The number of arbitration awards based on investment treaties has increased, resulting in several books written solely on the subject of investment treaty arbitration. New works have appeared on several aspects of the law on foreign investment. This work has held the area of the law together without fragmenting it any further. The carving out of an international law on foreign investment itself may have furthered fragmentation in international law. Yet, the aim was to ensure that the base remained clearly in international law principles. That aim does not appear to have been preserved in many of the later works which sought to carve out further areas as free-standing ones. The original niche of this work remains unaffected. It seeks to establish the foundations of the law clearly in the international law rules on state responsibility and dispute resolution rather than approach it with the central focus on investment treaties and arbitration which seems to have attracted the practitioner more than the scholar.

It also has a focus that is different from that of the other works in the field. It is written from the perspective of development. The claim to neutrality of the works in the field cloaks the fact that they deal with an asymmetrical system of the law created largely to ensure investment protection. The fact that it does not follow this routine does not by itself make it a partial work. As before, the criticisms of this work have been made best by my students who have come from all over the world. I have taught courses based on this book in London, at the Centre for Transnational Legal Studies, in Toronto, at Osgoode Hall Law School, at Dundee at the Centre for Petroleum and Natural Resources Law and at my own home institution, the National University of Singapore, which, through its joint programme with the New York University Law School, attracts a global body of students. All possible criticisms that could be made of its central approach are reflected in the work. No criticism can be more valuable to an academic than those made by young minds coming fresh to the subject. In many ways, the stances that were taken in the first two editions seem to be justified in light of the global economic crisis and the retreat of some of the tenets of free market liberalisation that it is alleged to have brought about.

That the subject will continue to undergo rapid changes is very clear. Even as the preface is written, new developments are taking place. As I sat to write it, the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union came into effect giving the EU competence over investment policy and investment treaties. It is not possible in this edition to speculate what the effects of the Treaty

might be. States, particularly in Latin America, are pulling out of investment treaties and the ICSID Convention. The United States and South Africa have announced major reviews of their investment treaties. Some treaties are being made without an investor–state dispute-resolution provision. There is an evident retreat from the perception that investment protection is the only purpose of the investment treaty by the recognition of defences often on the basis of the relevance of the international law generally and of the international law on human rights and the environment in particular. In any event, the newer treaties are beginning to include concerns relating to labour rights, human rights and the environment. The impact of sovereign wealth funds as foreign investors has to be assessed. These changes are captured in this edition, but the manner in which they will take hold is still unclear.

As indicated in the previous editions, this area of the law is in constant change simply because different interests clash and outcomes differ based on constantly changing power balances. As a consequence, it is not an area to be studied by looking at only the language of the treaties and the awards interpreting them (the approach taken in the conventional texts on the subject), but in light of a variety of factors, among them the movement of power balances among states, the dominance and retreat of particular economic theories at given periods and the prevailing viewpoints within the arbitral community. This edition seeks to capture these changing factors which are responsible for the rapid developments that have taken place in the law.

As in the case of the previous editions, I thank those who have travelled the same path with me in the study of this exciting branch of international law. Working with those at the Division on Investment and Enterprise at UNCTAD, particularly with James Chan and Anna Joubin-Brett, has enabled me to keep abreast of the new developments that have taken place, especially in the economic aspects of the field. My academic friends, Peter Muchlinski, Frederico Ortino, Gus van Harten, Kerry Rittich, Karl Sauvant, Wenhua Shan, David Schneiderman, Kenneth Vandevelde, Jiangyu Wang and Jean Ho, have always been good sources of information, criticism and commentary, for which I am grateful. The work was first written at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law at Cambridge. Its Directors, Sir Eli Lauterpacht and Professor James Crawford, have remained supportive. I thank also my graduate students, Huala Adolf, George Akpan, Lu Haitian and Adefolake Oyewande Adeyeye, who worked with me in aspects of this field.

I thank Finola O’Sullivan, Sinéad Moloney, Richard Woodham, Daniel Dunlavey and Martin Gleeson for the care taken over the production of my book.

The National University of Singapore has facilitated my research in every way I wished for. It has been a pleasure to be an academic at the NUS.

I commend to the readers of this work the excellent website run by Professor Andrew Newcombe of the University of Victoria, Canada, at <http://ita.law.uvic.ca>, which provides the texts of and other documents concerning investment treaty awards, and the equally excellent website run by Luke Peterson, www.iareporter.com, which reports on developments in the field. Both are free services of immense help to students of this field. Most of the arbitral awards cited in this work are to be found on these websites.

Thanga was there, as always. Ahila has now studied this area of the law. Ramanan and Vaishnavi have careers of their own. The book has grown up with them.

Preface to the second edition

The international law on foreign investment has witnessed an explosive growth since the last edition. The decade had witnessed a proliferation of bilateral and regional investment treaties, and a dramatic rise in litigation under such treaties. The attempt to fashion a multilateral instrument on investment within the World Trade Organization has given the debate on issues in the area a wider focus. This edition seeks to capture such developments.

In the course of the decade, I have had the good fortune of being involved actively in many facets of the operation of this area of the law. During such activity, I have acquired many friends who work in the area. My association with UNCTAD has brought me in contact with Karl Sauvant, Anna Joubin-Brett, Victoria Aranda and James Chan. It has also given me the opportunity to work with Arghyrios Fatouros, Peter Muchlinksy and Kenneth Vandavelde, the academic leaders of this field. They have added much to my understanding of the law. The many hours of arguments with them, in various parts of the world, have added to the pleasure of studying this area of the law.

The first edition was written while I was a visiting fellow at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge. The successive Directors of the Centre, Professor Sir Eli Lauterpacht and Professor James Crawford, have continued to encourage my efforts in this and other areas of international law.

My many students in Singapore and Dundee have always challenged me so that I was taught by them to know and remember that there are other ways in which the law could be looked at. To my critics, my answer would be that I am constantly made aware of their criticisms in the classroom. I have accommodated those criticisms in the text.

I thank Finola O'Sullivan, Alison Powell and Martin Gleeson for the care taken over the production of my book.

My research student, Lu Haitian, prepared the bibliography.

Thanga was there, as always. Ahila, Ramanan and Vaishnavi happily are now old enough to let their father alone.

Preface to the first edition

This book was written while I was on sabbatical leave from the National University of Singapore. I thank the Vice-Chancellor, the Council and Dean of the Faculty of Law for the generous terms on which I was granted the leave.

I spent the sabbatical year as a Visiting Fellow at the Research Centre for International Law of the University of Cambridge. I thank Eli Lauterpacht, the Director of the Centre, for many acts of kindness in making this year a happy and productive one.

I am grateful to Professor James Crawford, Whewell Professor of International Law at Cambridge, who read and commented on an early draft of this work, to Professor Detlev Vagts, Bemis Professor of International Law at Harvard, who enabled me to spend a month of research at the Harvard Law School and to Robin Pirrie, Fellow of Hughes Hall, Cambridge, who was helpful with his advice. I remain responsible for any errors and omissions.

As always, Thanga has been an unfailing source of strength. Ahila, Ramanan and Vaishnavi have given up time that should have been theirs.

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