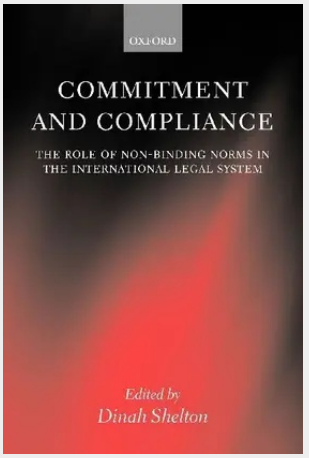
Shelton

Commitment and Compliance

The Role of Non-Binding Norms in the International Legal System

Commitment and Compliance is the first book to evaluate the impact on state behaviour of international norms adopted in forms that are not legally binding. The use of such 'soft law' has increased dramatically with the proliferation of international organizations. Whether and how such norms can be used effectively to supplement or substitute for legally binding obligations forms the heart of this discussion. In the study, a project of the American Society of International Law, the authors examine four areas of international law: human rights, the environment, arms control, and trade and finance. For each area, they assess the use of non-binding norms and ask whether such norms engender state compliance. More generally, the discussion also addresses the nature of international law and the role of non-binding norms in the international legal system.

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