

9 November 2023

## **The WGIII Academic Forum Steering Committee Nomination Statement**

### **Dr. Güneş Ünüvar**

The Academic Forum fulfills a very important purpose within the WGIII ecosystem, and has worked diligently since its establishment to contribute to the key issues currently being discussed in Vienna and New York. Its Working Papers and their frequent use in this context attests to this fact. My involvement with the WGIII process started early on, shortly after the mandate was granted to the WGIII. Ever since, I have had the privilege of being a member of the Academic Forum, and a regular observer at the WGIII on behalf of the Centre of Excellence for International Courts at the University of Copenhagen even after my departure from this institution. Thus, first and foremost, I have an in-depth, first-hand experience of the process. Like many members of the Academic Forum, I have worked extensively on the subject, and possess specialized knowledge in the field both as an academic and a practitioner, as also detailed in my CV.

While these traits are, in my opinion, indispensable for a Steering Committee member, the Academic Forum is full of fantastic, world-class scholars – and that is not what I primarily intend to bring on the table as a Steering Committee member. My primary aim is to help bolster the geographic and gender-based diversity of the Academic Forum. This diversity is not only desirable but absolutely necessary for an Academic Forum which reflects the diversity reflected in the Working Group III itself. Even a cursory review of the Academic Forum members will reveal that we are currently dealing with a striking imbalance in these aspects – it is dominated by scholars and professionals from, or based in, North America and Western Europe. To my knowledge, for example, I am the only Turkish member of the Academic Forum. If elected, I would proactively seek to involve members of the international economic law community from the least represented regions of the world and in particular from the Global South, including Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. We need them to get directly involved in our work. I believe their active involvement would bolster the representativeness of the Working Papers and other academic outputs we produce, and help mitigate the presumptions about their neutrality and objectivity – a foundational premise upon which the Academic Forum is, or should be, built.