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The Legal Basis for the Expansion of the Effectiveness of Arbitration Agreements: Taking Principal and Guarantee Contracts as Examples

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Abstract

The determination of the validity of arbitration agreements is fundamentally connected to principles of contract law. Traditional contract law doctrines, such as "party autonomy" and "privity of contract" often serve as pivotal references in this determination process. The introduction of the Draft Amendment to the *Arbitration Law of the People's Republic of China (Revised Draft)*, which extends the arbitration agreement in a principal contract to ancillary contracts, is of profound significance. It provides a robust legislative foundation for the expansion of the effectiveness of commercial arbitration agreements and marks a new phase in the development of arbitration in China. This study takes principal and guarantee contracts as a point of departure to delve into the jurisprudential basis for the extension of arbitration agreements from principal contracts to guarantee contracts. By doing so, it aims to offer a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the essence and scope of arbitration agreements, thereby laying a solid theoretical groundwork for the further development of arbitration.

1. Introduction

In today's era of global economic integration, economic activities have grown increasingly complex. With the continuous expansion of markets and the deepening division of labor, commercial transactions have moved beyond simple bilateral interactions, forming intricate networks involving multiple parties and interrelated contractual relationships. Against this backdrop, international commercial arbitration, with its flexibility, efficiency, and adaptability, has become a pivotal mechanism for resolving cross-border commercial disputes.

Arbitration agreements constitute the cornerstone of the arbitration system. A notable trend

regarding their effectiveness is the progressive expansion of their scope. In certain cases, the traditional theory of arbitration, which confines the effectiveness of an arbitration agreement to the signatory parties of a written agreement, has been set aside in favor of extending its applicability to non-signatories. For example, doctrines such as "group of companies," "piercing the corporate veil," and "third-party beneficiary" have been invoked in jurisdictions worldwide to expand the scope of arbitration agreements. This development reflects a broader trend in international arbitration to adapt its mechanisms to the needs of modern commercial practices.

In practice, jurisdictions worldwide have increasingly adopted more liberal approaches to defining the scope of arbitration agreements, aiming to bring more disputes within the ambit of arbitration. For instance, the United States has recognized non-signatories' participation in arbitration under doctrines like equitable estoppel, while France has embraced the "extension effect" under its jurisprudence. These practices underscore the necessity of analyzing arbitration agreements' extended application beyond signatory parties.

Although the Arbitration Law of the People's Republic of China (Revised Draft) extends the

arbitration agreement in a principal contract to ancillary contracts, thereby establishing a solid legislative foundation for the expansion of commercial arbitration agreements, the jurisprudential basis underpinning this development remains largely unexplored in academic discourse. As significant components of contractual diversity in the context of globalization, principal and guarantee contracts play a unique role and hold considerable importance in the expansion of arbitration agreements. The jurisprudential principles underlying this phenomenon merit thorough and detailed analysis.

2. The Extension of the Principle of Party Autonomy

2.1 Consistency in the Parties' Expectations Regarding Arbitration as a Dispute Resolution Mechanism

The extension of arbitration agreements to non-signatories, such as guarantors, is a complex issue that challenges traditional legal doctrines like the principle of privity of contract. A critical rationale for such an extension lies in the guarantor's implicit acceptance of the arbitration clause through their conduct and the interconnected nature of principal and guarantee contracts.

In commercial transactions, the guarantor's decision to provide a guarantee is not made in isolation. It typically involves a thorough evaluation of the principal contract, including its dispute resolution provisions. When a guarantor knowingly undertakes obligations under a principal contract containing an arbitration clause, their conduct can be reasonably interpreted as an implicit acceptance of the arbitration framework. This implicit acceptance aligns with the principle of party autonomy, which emphasizes the voluntary nature of dispute resolution mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, principal contracts and guarantee contracts are often closely linked. Disputes arising from the performance of the principal contract frequently involve the guarantor. In such cases, maintaining consistency in the dispute resolution mechanism ensures efficiency, fairness, and predictability. The guarantor's implicit alignment with the arbitration clause serves not only the interests of the contracting parties but also the broader goals of commercial arbitration, such as expeditious and confidential dispute resolution.

However, the argument that "awareness equals acceptance" requires careful justification. While the guarantor's knowledge of the arbitration clause provides a strong foundation, it is not

sufficient to presume absolute consent. Critics argue that this approach may undermine the guarantor's rights, particularly if they are not expressly consulted during the drafting of the arbitration agreement. Additionally, such an extension could be seen as conflicting with the principle of privity, which restricts contractual obligations and rights to the original signatories.

To address these concerns, it is essential to examine the guarantor's role within the broader commercial context. Guarantee contracts are inherently ancillary to principal contracts, and the guarantor's obligations are often contingent upon the performance of the principal contract. By voluntarily assuming this role, the guarantor implicitly integrates into the overall contractual framework, including its dispute resolution mechanism. This interpretation is consistent with commercial practices, where implied agreements are frequently inferred from the conduct of the parties and the surrounding circumstances.

Moreover, the benefits of arbitration-such as confidentiality, efficiency, and expertise-further reinforce the rationale for extending the arbitration agreement to guarantors. While these advantages alone cannot justify the extension, they provide additional support for viewing the guarantor's conduct as implicit consent. By aligning all parties under a unified dispute resolution mechanism, arbitration clauses in principal contracts promote consistency and fairness across interrelated contractual relationships.

Comparative legal practices offer further insights into this issue. For instance, French jurisprudence recognizes the "extension effect" of arbitration agreements in cases where the guarantor is closely connected to the principal contract. Similarly, U.S. courts have invoked the doctrine of equitable estoppel to bind non-signatories to arbitration agreements when their conduct indicates implicit acceptance. These practices highlight the evolving nature of arbitration law and its adaptability to the complexities of modern commercial transactions.

In conclusion, extending arbitration agreements to guarantors underscores the importance of implied consent in commercial contexts. The guarantor's conduct, combined with the interconnected nature of principal and guarantee contracts, provides a strong justification for such an extension. By emphasizing the parties' shared expectations and aligning the dispute resolution framework, this practice reflects the pragmatic and flexible nature of arbitration as a mechanism for resolving complex disputes. At the same time, it is crucial to balance this flexibility with safeguards to ensure that the guarantor's rights are adequately protected.

2.2 The True Intent of the Parties from the Perspective of Commercial Practice

From a broader perspective of commercial practice, the pursuit of efficiency and cost optimization is central to the goals of parties engaging in business activities. In complex transactions that involve both principal and guarantee contracts, resolving disputes within a unified framework becomes not only a practical consideration but also a strategic one. Arbitration, as a widely recognized and preferred method of dispute resolution, provides a robust and impartial platform for the fair and timely determination of the parties' rights and obligations. Its efficient procedures, professional arbitrators, and relatively flexible rules enable it to address even complex commercial disputes with greater speed and cost-effectiveness compared to traditional litigation, thus avoiding the extended timelines and financial burdens associated with prolonged court proceedings.

Principal and guarantee contracts are typically interwoven within the broader commercial arrangement, with both contracts sharing common economic interests and legal responsibilities. The performance of the principal contract directly impacts the guarantor's liability, making the two contracts intrinsically connected. If these contracts are subject to different dispute resolution

mechanisms-such as arbitration for the principal contract and litigation for the guarantee contract-this divergence can introduce significant procedural complexity and result in additional costs for the parties involved. Parties would be forced to navigate through two separate legal processes, each with its own procedural requirements, timelines, and associated costs. This fragmentation of the dispute resolution process not only increases the time and resources needed but also carries the risk of inconsistent outcomes, where the two different forums might reach conflicting decisions on related issues. Such inconsistency heightens the uncertainty for the parties and can lead to additional risks, further exacerbating potential financial and reputational losses.

In long-term commercial relationships, parties often develop a reliance on arbitration as their preferred method of resolving disputes. Over time, this habitual use of arbitration fosters a culture of trust and predictability within the business relationship, as parties become familiar with the benefits arbitration provides-such as its speed, confidentiality, and specialized expertise. This reliance is not just a procedural preference; it reflects the acknowledgment of arbitration's practical advantages in managing disputes effectively and efficiently, which is crucial for maintaining ongoing cooperation between parties. Given that arbitration has become the norm in such commercial relationships, the guarantor, as an integral part of the transaction, should logically be expected to follow this established practice.

Such adherence to arbitration, in this context, should not be seen as an undue restriction on the guarantor's freedom or autonomy. Rather, it represents a natural extension of the rational and coherent practices within the commercial transaction framework. When a guarantor agrees to provide a guarantee, they are not only accepting the economic risks associated with the principal contract but also, implicitly, the dispute resolution mechanism that governs it. Given that the dispute resolution mechanism in the principal contract is a key element of the overall transaction structure, the guarantor should reasonably anticipate the implications of this provision when agreeing to offer a guarantee. This anticipation aligns with the inherent logic of the commercial transaction, which aims to resolve any potential disputes within a unified and efficient framework, ultimately serving the best interests of all parties involved.

Thus, the guarantor's reasonable expectation of the dispute resolution mechanism specified in the principal contract is consistent with the true intent of the parties. It is an extension of the parties' shared understanding of how disputes should be resolved in a manner that respects the integrity and efficiency of the broader commercial relationship. Therefore, while the guarantor's participation in arbitration may not always be explicitly outlined in the written terms of the guarantee, their implied consent to this process should be recognized as part of the logical coherence of the commercial arrangement. By following this approach, all parties are able to engage in dispute resolution in a consistent, predictable, and efficient manner that upholds the principles of fairness and mutual respect, while also minimizing the risks and costs typically associated with litigation.

3. The Breakthrough of Contractual Relativity

3.1 The Close Economic Link Between Principal and Ancillary Contracts

In the complex structure of commercial transactions, there exists a close economic connection between the principal and guarantee contracts. As a type of ancillary contract, the primary purpose of a guarantee contract is to provide a mechanism of security to ensure the proper performance of the principal contract. The guarantor, based on their own credit or assets, commits to assuming responsibility in the event that the debtor under the principal contract fails to fulfill their obligations. The arising responsibility and its scope are directly related to the performance of the principal contract, establishing a causal relationship and a dynamic interaction between the two contracts.

For example, in the context of project financing guarantees, the principal contract involves key aspects such as financing arrangements, fund utilization, project progress, and profit distribution. The guarantor's responsibility is closely tied to these critical elements of the principal contract. If the principal contract project progresses smoothly and achieves the expected return as planned, the guarantor may not have to assume any actual liability. Conversely, if the principal contract encounters delays, funding shortages, or fails to meet the anticipated returns, the guarantor may be required to intervene according to the terms of the guarantee contract and assume corresponding financial responsibility.

Due to this close economic connection, when performance issues arise under the principal contract and lead to disputes, expanding the effect of the principal contract's arbitration agreement to the guarantee contract allows for the integrated resolution of a series of related disputes involving both the principal and guarantee contracts within a unified arbitration framework. This approach avoids conflicts and inconsistencies that may arise from using different dispute resolution methods. Different dispute resolution methods are often governed by distinct legal rules, procedures, and evidence requirements, which can easily cause divergence and conflict between the parties to the principal and guarantee contracts, thereby impacting the efficiency and fairness of dispute resolution. Expanding the effect of the arbitration agreement to the guarantee contract ensures that all disputes related to the performance of the principal contract are addressed under the same set of arbitration rules and procedures, thus resolving issues more effectively and maintaining the stability and predictability of the entire commercial transaction.

3.2 Balancing Third-Party Interests

The principle of contractual relativity has long occupied a foundational position in traditional contract law. Its basic premise is that the rights and obligations under a contract can only be conferred upon or imposed on the contracting parties, meaning that a contract only binds the parties involved, and third parties cannot enforce the contract. However, in modern, complex commercial environments, it is sometimes necessary to make appropriate exceptions to the principle of contractual relativity in order to achieve fairness and efficiency. One such example is the extension of the effect of the arbitration agreement in the principal contract to the guarantee contract. In this process, balancing the interests of the guarantor becomes a key consideration.

Although the parties to the principal contract may have opted for arbitration as their preferred dispute resolution method, the guarantor, who plays a crucial role in the transaction, is not a signatory to the arbitration agreement. This creates potential procedural fairness issues, as the guarantor may not be fully aware of the facts, evidence, or nuances of the principal contract. Therefore, it is essential for the arbitral tribunal to ensure the guarantor's access to relevant evidence and information, allowing them to effectively participate in the arbitration process. The tribunal may require the parties to the principal contract to actively provide evidence or grant the guarantor additional time to gather necessary information.

Additionally, the guarantors involvement in arbitration could result in significant costs, including legal fees, arbitration expenses, and potential travel costs. If the guarantor is forced to participate due to the extension of the arbitration agreement, the financial burden may be disproportionately high, leading to potential unfairness. In such instances, the arbitral tribunal

should consider allocating arbitration costs equitably, particularly with regard to evidence collection, to mitigate the financial strain on the guarantor.

Furthermore, if the guarantor faces harm to their procedural or substantive rights during the arbitration, the tribunal should take protective measures. For instance, if the guarantor incurs losses due to unforeseen circumstances, the tribunal could, in the spirit of fairness, require the parties to the principal contract to provide compensation. To protect the guarantor's substantive rights, the tribunal must carefully define the scope of the guarantor's responsibilities, ensuring they are not burdened with excessive obligations.

These measures help maintain a balance between fairness and efficiency, even when extending the effect of the arbitration agreement to the guarantee contract. By addressing these procedural and financial concerns, the extension of arbitration agreements can protect the guarantor's legitimate interests while promoting a more equitable and efficient path for resolving disputes in complex commercial relationships. This approach fosters the continued development of commercial transactions by offering a just, reasonable, and effective dispute resolution mechanism.

4. Principle of Fair and Reasonable Expectation

4.1 Determining the Scope of the Arbitration Agreement Based on the Parties' Reasonable Expectations

The principle of fair and reasonable expectation, which has evolved from the system of anticipated interests, requires inferring the parties' intentions based on their reasonable interests. In the context of the complex commercial relationship formed by the principal and guarantee contracts, the agreement made by the parties regarding the arbitration clause in the principal contract, as well as the guarantor's understanding and involvement in the relevant matters of the principal contract, will collectively shape specific reasonable expectations.

From the perspective of a rational commercial entity, when we carefully consider the transactional background of the principal and guarantee contracts, as well as the series of actions taken by the parties, it is reasonable to infer that the guarantor has an expectation that the effect of the arbitration agreement in the principal contract extends to them. For example, in certain commercial scenarios, the guarantor may actively participate in overseeing the performance of the principal contract, closely monitoring its execution, including the implementation of various terms in the contract, the fulfillment of the parties' rights and obligations, and tracking various factors that could impact performance. This level of involvement indicates the guarantor's recognition of the importance of the principal contract and their awareness of the potential liabilities they may bear in its performance.

Based on this involvement, it is reasonable to infer that the guarantor should hold an expectation regarding the dispute resolution method in the principal contract, one that aligns with the extent of their participation. This expectation should include the scope of the arbitration agreement's effect. In a rational commercial environment, the behavior and decisions of the parties are often driven by considerations of their own interests and an understanding of the overall structure of the transaction. Since the guarantor has chosen to engage in matters related to the principal contract, they should anticipate potential disputes and their corresponding resolution methods. If the principal contract expressly includes an arbitration clause, the guarantor, by participating, should implicitly accept that this dispute resolution method may also apply to them, unless they explicitly state otherwise when providing the guarantee.

This reasonable expectation, formed based on the behavior of the parties and the context of the transaction, serves as a critical basis for applying the principle of fair and reasonable expectation in determining the scope of the arbitration agreement's effect.

4.2 Ensuring Fairness in Arbitration Proceedings for All Parties

When discussing the expansion of the scope of arbitration agreements, the principle of fair and reasonable expectation is central to ensuring that all parties are treated equitably throughout the process. This principle is crucial when resolving disputes arising from both principal and guarantee contracts. If only the parties to the principal contract are allowed to resolve their disputes through arbitration, while the guarantor is excluded from the arbitration proceedings, there is a risk that the guarantor's rights and interests will not be adequately protected. In such a scenario, the guarantor may find themselves at a disadvantage, unable to participate in the process that directly impacts their obligations and potential liabilities.

The economic interests and legal liabilities of the principal and guarantee contracts are intrinsically interconnected. The performance of the principal contract has a direct impact on the guarantor's responsibility, as the guarantor's obligations are typically contingent upon the fulfillment or default of the principal contract. For instance, in cases of default or breach of the principal contract, the guarantor may be called upon to fulfill the contractual obligations of the primary party. If the guarantor is excluded from the arbitration process, they are deprived of an essential opportunity to present their perspective, respond to claims, and assert their own legal rights.

Without the ability to participate in arbitration, the guarantor may be unable to effectively present critical facts, evidence, and arguments that are relevant to their defense. This lack of participation could lead to the arbitration tribunal not fully understanding the context and implications of the guarantee contract, and ultimately, the guarantor's interests may not be adequately considered. Such a situation could result in an unjust or unfavorable ruling that disproportionately affects the guarantor, thereby undermining the fairness of the arbitration process and compromising their rights.

Extending the effect of the arbitration agreement from the principal contract to the guarantee contract ensures that all relevant parties, including the guarantor, have the opportunity to resolve disputes in a fair and transparent arbitration process. This extension allows the guarantor to be included in the arbitration proceedings, ensuring that they have equal standing with the principal contract parties. Both the principal contract parties and the guarantor are given an equal opportunity to present their case, submit evidence, voice their opinions, and protect their rights, all within the framework of established arbitration rules and applicable law. By incorporating the guarantor into the arbitration process, the principle of fair and reasonable expectation is respected, as it guarantees that all parties are treated in a manner consistent with their reasonable expectations based on the commercial relationship and the nature of their involvement.

This arrangement upholds the fairness and impartiality of the arbitration proceedings, as each party has the chance to contribute to the dispute resolution process. It not only ensures that the guarantor's rights are considered, but it also reinforces the integrity of the arbitration system as a whole. By safeguarding the rights of all parties involved, this approach fosters a more balanced and equitable outcome, promoting the stability and sound development of the commercial transaction environment. In turn, this contributes to the long-term trust and reliability of arbitration as a dispute resolution mechanism in commercial law, encouraging more parties to rely on arbitration as a fair and efficient alternative to litigation.

5. Principle of Estoppel

5.1 Estoppel Effects Arising from the Guarantor's Actions and Implied Representations

The principle of estoppel is an important legal doctrine, with significant implications in the field of arbitration. Its relevance is particularly pronounced in the specific relationship between the principal contract and the guarantee contract. When a guarantor is aware that the principal contract contains an arbitration agreement, their subsequent actions and implied representations are crucial to the application of estoppel.

For instance, in practical situations, if the guarantor actively participates in the negotiation of a dispute related to the principal contract, this indicates that they have engaged in matters related to the resolution of the principal contract's disputes. Moreover, if, during the participation process, the guarantor does not object to the arbitration agreement, such behavior is inconsistent with an attitude that would deny the effect of the arbitration agreement. This active participation, without raising objections, contrasts sharply with a position that rejects the validity of the arbitration agreement.

From the perspective of legal logic and fairness, these actions and implied representations by the guarantor form the basis for the application of estoppel. According to the principle of estoppel, once a party has engaged in certain conduct or expressed a certain attitude implicitly, they may not later assert rights or refuse to fulfill obligations based on arguments that contradict their prior behavior or stance. In this case, the guarantor cannot invoke the absence of consent to the arbitration agreement as a basis to reject the extension of the arbitration agreement's effect to themselves. This constraint is a reasonable consequence of the guarantor's prior conduct and implied representations, which to some extent bind the guarantor to the arbitration agreement of the principal contract.

This approach ensures consistency and predictability in the behavior of the parties involved in disputes concerning the principal and guarantee contracts, thus safeguarding the fairness and stability of the arbitration process and protecting the legitimate rights of all parties. Moreover, it encourages parties to act cautiously during their involvement in related matters, preventing them from engaging in actions that could lead to estoppel, and fostering the orderly and equitable development of the legal relationship. Ultimately, this enhances the role of arbitration as an effective mechanism for dispute resolution.

5.2 Maintaining Transaction Stability and the Principle of Good Faith

The principle of estoppel plays a pivotal role in preserving the stability of commercial transactions and upholding the principle of good faith. In today's complex and dynamic commercial landscape, the stability and integrity of transactions are foundational to the smooth functioning of business activities. Commercial entities rely on a predictable and orderly transaction process, where their actions and representations are consistent and binding. If businesses were allowed to arbitrarily disregard their prior conduct or implied representations, it could undermine the entire transactional order, leading to an unpredictable and unreliable environment for trade and dispute resolution.

For example, consider a situation where a guarantor, after participating in negotiations regarding a dispute under the principal contract, later refuses to accept the extension of the arbitration agreement's effect by claiming that they did not consent to the arbitration clause. This

refusal not only challenges the agreement but also creates an inconsistency in the expectations that the parties to the principal contract and other relevant stakeholders have concerning the guarantor's conduct. Such an act of inconsistency can introduce significant uncertainty into the business relationship, leading to doubts about the reliability of the parties' actions and complicating the resolution of future disputes. The refusal of the guarantor to honor previously implied understandings can disrupt the smooth flow of negotiations and further erode trust among the parties involved.

On the other hand, by ensuring that the guarantor is bound by the arbitration agreement of the principal contract through the application of the estoppel principle, the transaction process becomes more predictable and stable. Estoppel prevents a party from acting contrary to their prior representations or behavior, thereby reinforcing trust among the parties and strengthening the integrity of the arbitration agreement. When all parties are aware that once they have made a representation or taken certain actions, they will be held accountable for the legal consequences, they are more likely to act with greater caution, responsibility, and commitment to their obligations. This heightened sense of accountability ensures that parties are less likely to take inconsistent actions that would disrupt the transaction, fostering greater cooperation and predictability.

Furthermore, the estoppel principle instills a greater sense of reliability in the commercial transaction environment, as businesses can be confident that other parties will honor their commitments and implied representations. This commitment to consistency not only promotes smoother business dealings but also sustains the stability and healthy development of the commercial environment. The legal and financial interests of all parties involved are better protected, as the principle of estoppel ensures that no party can unduly alter the terms of the transaction or dispute resolution process after they have taken part in it, thus promoting fairness and trust.

Ultimately, the application of estoppel reinforces the notion of good faith in business transactions. It ensures that parties act honestly, honor their commitments, and refrain from taking advantage of previous actions or representations to the detriment of others. This adherence to established norms and principles facilitates the smooth conduct of transactions, enhances the stability of business relationships, and promotes the long-term growth and development of the commercial environment. In doing so, it provides a legal framework that supports the legitimate expectations of all parties involved and fosters a trustworthy, efficient, and fair marketplace.

6.Conclusion

The extension of international commercial arbitration agreements to guarantee contracts is underpinned by a robust legal foundation. The principle of party autonomy emphasizes the right of parties to make independent decisions regarding dispute resolution, and the implied acceptance by the guarantor can be regarded as a reasonable extension of their role in the specific contractual relationship. Breaking the principle of privity of contract, in light of the close interrelationship between the principal and guarantee contracts, while ensuring the protection of the guarantor's interests, plays a pivotal role in effectively resolving disputes and ensuring fairness and justice.

The principle of fair and reasonable expectation infers the intention of the parties based on their legitimate interests, ensuring that all parties are treated equitably in the arbitration process. By incorporating this principle, the arbitral tribunal safeguards the reasonable expectations formed by the parties based on their behavior and engagement in the contract, thereby preventing unfair surprises and ensuring that their expectations are respected throughout the proceedings. Moreover,

the estoppel principle guarantees the consistency and predictability of the guarantor's actions. It prevents a party from adopting an inconsistent stance after implicitly accepting the arbitration agreement, thus maintaining the integrity and stability of commercial transactions. This principle fosters an environment of trust and reliability in legal relationships, providing a clear structure for future commercial engagements.

In practice, these legal principles do not operate in isolation but rather interact and must be evaluated comprehensively. The arbitral tribunal, when considering the specific circumstances of each case, is required to weigh a variety of factors, balancing the interests of the parties, the nature of the dispute, and the applicable legal frameworks. This comprehensive approach allows the tribunal to reasonably extend the scope of the arbitration agreement and ensure a fair and efficient dispute resolution process. Such extensions should not only be based on the content of the arbitration agreement itself but also on the context within which the parties have conducted their commercial activities.

As international commercial transactions continue to evolve and become increasingly complex, it is crucial to deepen the study and application of these legal principles. Doing so will help refine arbitration systems to better accommodate the challenges presented by modern commerce. By providing clearer guidance to the parties involved, ensuring their rights are protected, and reinforcing the legitimacy of arbitration as a dispute resolution mechanism, the principles of party autonomy, fair and reasonable expectation, and estoppel will enhance the global efficacy of arbitration. In turn, this will contribute to the more effective functioning of arbitration in the context of global economic exchange, promoting stability and legal certainty in international trade.

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