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POSITION PAPER

INCREASING ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Summary

Non-state-actors (NSAs), as valuable intermediaries of a two-way information flow between projects and fish workers, and the public at large, and actors of change are fundamental in ensuring the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa

- A Process approach guided by the principles of realism, flexibility and pragmatism, is followed in increasing the role of NSAs in fisheries management.
- A four-prong toolkit consisting of defining an appropriate policy framework; inventory/ mapping of NSAs active in fisheries and aquaculture and brainstorming; establishing regional platforms of NSAs, for dialogue, coordination and exchange of experiences; and institutionalizing same, by embedding them within the framework of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM); is the vehicle for retooling the role of NSA in fisheries management.
- Non-State Actors in all its diversity must be on board for the effective implementation of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS)
- Ensuring NSAs have improved capacity and awareness of issues and management arrangements is vital for them to engage effectively in regional fisheries and aquaculture policy agenda.
- Engaging with non-State-actors plays an important role in gaining support for policies as well as testing ideas and proposals with those who are most vulnerable

Increasing role of NSAs, coupled with the legitimacy afforded them through their respective Regional Platforms and linkage to AFRM, implies that they are co-owners of, and are equally critical to the effective implementation of the PFRS.

Introduction and Background

Involving non-state actors (NSAs) in the formulation and implementation of public policies has become a major feature of socio-economic and political life. This reflects the emergence of new forms of 'participatory democracy', which emphasize the need for a more consensual way of making and implementing policy through the inclusion of all key stakeholders. The expected benefits

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of such a deliberative process of policy formulation and implementation are many: increased ownership, new public-private partnerships, consolidation of democratisation, and improved sustainability.

Explanation of Non-State Actors

Non-State Actors are individuals, entities, groups or organizations with sufficient economic, political or social power to influence and bring about change at the local, national or international level, even though they do not belong to any established institution of a state. The world of non-state actors is not a homogenous group. Their interests, structure and influence may vary. Non- State Actors include:

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in all their diversity, according to national characteristics;
- Economic and social partners, including trade union and professional organizations and;
- The private sector.

NSAs' common interests in fisheries and aquaculture development include: fish trade, processing and marketing; boat making and fishing gears; advocacy, environment, natural resource management, rural and community development, finance, food security, research and capacity building. They are therefore fundamental in ensuring the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa

Since the mid-1980s, NSAs have become an important factor in economic development agenda in virtually all the regions of Africa for these and other reasons: They are important agents for disseminating information produced by agencies and projects. They are important carriers and producers of information, which assist projects and government agencies in performing their monitoring and advisory functions effectively. They tend to have preferential access and interaction with producers' organizations, and thus these actors have increasingly become indispensable intermediaries of a two-way information flow between projects and fish workers, and the public at large.

Performance of NSAs: Few national and regional NSAs are well established and perform well. Some have a strong participation of women and youths. In recent years, these NSAs have played and continue to play important roles in terms of developing and scaling-up best practices which include:

- promotion of the representation of the interests of social groups; capacity building of fishers and producers;
- development of voluntary Codes and Manuals of best practices (e.g. Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Madagascar, etc.);
- adoption of inclusive and participatory processes in the negotiation of fisheries access agreements (instance of NSA in Senegal).

In addition, NSAs have been useful in the regulation and monitoring of state performance; effective in promoting co-management in fisheries; and mobilization of social actors to increase their consciousness and impact. They have also been effective in promoting participatory monitoring and evaluation at national and community level; mobilization and enhancement of community participation and community resources for increased livelihoods, food security and wealth generation.

However, the majority of the NSAs are not well organized, with unclear mandates and lack legitimacy. There are also clusters of regional NSAs in some regions of the continent with unclear and distinctive mandates among them. Many lack and/or have weak linkages between them and national NSAs. This situation is exacerbated by the absence of an overarching body to foster coordination between these organizations at regional levels. The lack of clarity on the mandate of these organizations (at both national and regional levels) and poor coordination between them at regional levels is an obstacle to any realistic and rational support for enhancing their capacity and empowerment.

The Call for Action

It is in this context, that the Joint Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2014, urged African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member States "to facilitate the participation of non-state actors in fisheries and aquaculture decision-making processes".

Within the same year (2014), the Heads of State and Government in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, made the Declaration on: commitments to Halving Poverty by the year 2025, through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation through:

i. sustaining annual agricultural GDP growth at least 6%
ii. establishing and/or strengthen inclusive public-private partnerships for at least five (5) priority agricultural commodity value chains with strong linkage to smallholder agriculture
iii. creating job opportunities for at least 30% of the youth in agricultural value chains and
iv. preferential entry and participation by women and youth in gainful and attractive agribusiness

The strong emphasis placed on the inclusion of NSAs as policy-influencing and implementing actors, stems from among others: disillusionment with the ability and capacity of governments and international agencies to implement effective development policies for poor and vulnerable sections of the population, and as a means of self-employment; the weaknesses in many government run extension services and generally low performance of government programs which are generally improved, the impact of state policy enhanced and made more widespread, when NSAs are involved.

Problem Statement

The effectiveness of many NSAs in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa is affected by among others: weak institutional capacity, weak linkages between the various NSAs at national and regional levels, and inadequate working relationships with State actors. The weak capacity and poor coordination is exacerbated by the absence of an overarching body to foster coordination between these organizations at regional, as well as, continental levels. This poor coordination between them particularly at regional levels is an obstacle to any realistic or rational support for enhancing their capacity and empowerment and deprive society of their valuable contribution in the transformation of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture for food, livelihoods and wealth.

Policy Response

The Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) was elaborated through inclusive, iterative and participatory processes which included NSA representatives. The Policy Framework and Reform Strategy underscores the need for empowerment of NSAs and the development of advocacy strategy to facilitate the inclusion of stakeholders in fisheries management and decision-making processes at national and regional levels. However, there is the need to operationalize the PFRS to effectively increase the participation of NSAs in fisheries management and aquaculture.

A Process approach guided by the principles of realism, flexibility and pragmatism, is followed in operationalizing the PFRS to effectively increase the role of NSAs in fisheries management. This means starting from the diversity of local conditions, finding regional-specific ways to select representative and competent partners; accepting that adequate information flows, sensitization and capacity building are pre-requisites for a genuine involvement of non-state actors; relating processes to concrete policy issues or programs, primarily at regional level, and putting in place the institutional framework, as well as, the human and financial resources to ensure a proper facilitation and follow-up of the process.

Four- Prong Toolkit for Increasing Role of NSAs

The components of the four-prong toolkit are: defining an appropriate policy framework, Inventory/ mapping of NSAs active in fisheries and aquaculture and Brainstorming; establishing regional NSA Platforms for dialogue, coordination and exchange experiences, institutionalizing the Platforms by linking them within the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM).

Defining an appropriate policy framework:

The "appropriate policy framework" is the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and aquaculture in Africa (PFRS). The PFRS was developed through an inclusive and participatory process involving non-state actors. It underpins the AU principles of the necessity for States to work with non-state actors - that is those whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power; but are working to unite people to advance shared goals and interests. AU-IBAR also recognizes that the outcome of the PFRS implementation will be significantly influenced by the ability to forge strong working relations between government apparatus and non-state actors.

However, there are still 'missing links 'or critical gaps which need to be filled, in both strategic and operational terms. For instance, clarification of the objectives of PFRS vis-s-vis non-state actors, the roles of non-state actors in the implementation processes of the PFRS, the boundaries of their involvement, taking into account the legitimate roles to be played by other actors, and the ways and means to gradually institutionalize the place of NSA at regional and continental levels, in the context of the PFRS.

These missing links or critical gaps were filled though a series of consultative meetings and workshops and will be strengthened in partnership with NSA over the years.

In order to help promote the utilization and ownership of the PFRS, NSAs must possess the knowledge and skills to participate and strengthen this initiative for their own benefit. This will be accomplished through capacity building, public education and training, as appropriate.

Inventory/Mapping and Brainstorming

Cognizant of the pivotal role of NSAs in the implementation of the PFRS and in order to formulate appropriate action plans to strengthen NSAs capacity in this regard, inventory/mapping of NSAs active in the fisheries and aquaculture sector at the local, national and regional levels were conducted in the five regions (North, West, Central, East and South). The inventory of NSAs focused on the NSAs distribution, capacity needs, and relationship with the communities, representativeness, their status, mandates and objectives in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa.

A Coordination Meeting of NSAs representatives aassessed the status, mandate, representativeness and legitimacy of NSAs; and evaluated the ways and means to strengthen the roles of NSA in fisheries management. The Meeting further analyzed obstacles to the establishment and operationalization of a coordination mechanism at national and, in particular, regional level; examined the institutional and legal framework for the cooperation and partnership between NSAs and state actors for decision-making in the fisheries management process in AU MS

The Meeting developed and validated Action plans for the establishment of regional platforms for non-state actors in Central, Eastern and Western Africa. It was agreed that the Southern Region will provide its action plans after due consultations among countries of the region and noted the presence of the regional platform for non-states actors in North Africa. It identified entry points for the regional platforms within the framework of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism.

The exchange of experience among participants widen their horizon of African fisheries and aquaculture; gave them a better appreciation of their pivotal roles in the implementation processes of the PFRS, the boundaries of their involvement, and the need to update their mandates. The need to work to be legitimized within their different States, and to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among themselves but also with RECs, regional fishery bodies, Water Basin Commissions and arrangements in their respective regions was highlighted.

The consultations further enabled NSA representatives to identify possible opportunities for public-NSAs engagements in fisheries and aquaculture sector, summarized in Table 1; and agreed on their strengthened roles (Box 2).

Table 1: *Possible opportunities public-NSAs engagements in fisheries and aquaculture sector*

Major areas to support	Examples of Products and/ or services	Public sector partners	NSAs
Food safety and quality	Certification services and Traceability systems	Government and Research institutions	Private laboratories
Supply chain management and market access	Processing infrastructure, Production standards, Niche product development	Research institutions, NGOs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
Capacity building	Fish health services, Entrepreneurship training, Key farmer demonstration farms	Aquaculture research institutes, Universities	Private training units, Fishers' and fish farmers' assoc.
Technological development	Use of waste in production chains, Implementation of standards and best practices	National and Intern, research Intuitions	Industry association, Fishers' and fish farmers' association
Financial services	Microcredit, loans, lease	Donors, NGOs, Banks	Microfinance institutions

Box 2: Strengthened Roles of NSA in fisheries management

- Co-owners and active implementers of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa
- Develop and implement public awareness campaigns and demonstration actions on specific issues;
- facilitate multi-stakeholder activities and events such as round table discussions, engage the public and private sector;
- Organize capacity building activities;
- develop best practices and demonstrate practical ways of overcoming obstacles and barriers in adopting best practice;
- Improve and broaden networks and coalitions;
- Contribute to the introduction of co-finance specific activities (cofounding), pilot use and evaluation of innovative financial instruments; indicate how resources can potentially be mobilized through NSAs actions;
- Test the feasibility and efficiency of innovative technologies and their applications;
- conduct/participate in monitoring and evaluation processes; and
- Disseminate results through their networks and channels.

Establishing Regional NSA Platforms

NSA representatives agreed to institutionalize their place at both regional and continental levels. They established "The Regional Platform of Non-State Actors in the Field of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Eastern and West Africa, and also elaborated and adopted the Statutes of the Platforms.

Purposes of the Platform The Regional Platform of non-State-actors in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in ---, will function as a forum for dialogue, coordination and exchange of experiences between NSAs so as to contribute; (in collaboration with policy makers and other stakeholders, for creation of improved policies and rules for the management of the fisheries sector and aquaculture in --.

Objectives:

- Strengthen NSAs in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in the member countries in order to ensure an effective implementation of the policy framework and reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa at local, national and regional levels;
- Offer a platform for sharing of experiences, information and best practices for the benefit of non-State actors at the regional level.
- Play a monitoring role in order to ensure respect for ethical principles and participatory governance in the fishing and aquaculture sectors, ensuring

coherence, as well as sustainability of policies and interventions so as to ensure sustainable livelihoods in fishing communities and provide food security.

Membership in the regional platform is open to all NSAs in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, being legally recognized by a Government, being a member of the national Council of an NSA within their own country if it already exists, or otherwise joining during implementation.

Membership Category, Members of the regional platform of NSA are from:

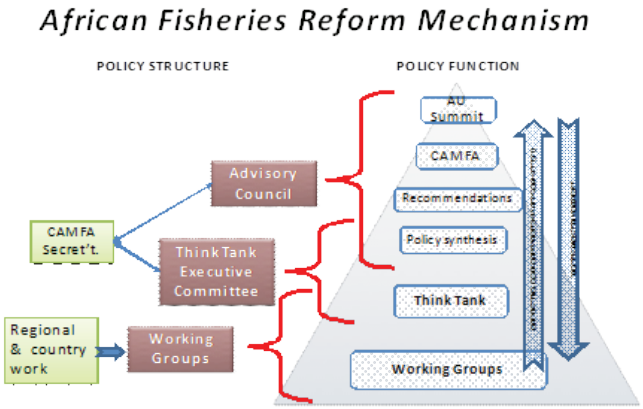
- A non-governmental organization and related organizations working in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, at regional or national level, and operating in a State of the region;
- Community organizations in the sector of fisheries and aquaculture in a State of the region;
- Organizations of civil society in the sector of fisheries and aquaculture of the region; and
- Private sector involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the region.

Institutionalizing the Platforms

At the continental level: the mechanism for the coordination of the Regional NSA Platforms is within the framework of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM). AFRM is a coherent continental partnership platform that facilitates the development, adoption and implementation of reforms in fishery and aquaculture governance and management that would contribute towards transforming Africa's fisheries from current levels of overexploitation and overcapitalization towards environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Its overarching objective is to strengthen governance, coherence, minimize duplication and hence improve progress in development of African fisheries and aquaculture; as well as, serve as a platform for coordination, information sharing, knowledge generation, advocacy, policy development and resources mobilization. (See figure below).

The pyramid structure with the evidence-generation functions at the base informs the Think Tank events for policy synthesis and recommendations to the CAMFA. The *Working Groups* are technical, policy-related groups to discuss key issues in fisheries and aquaculture on the continent and provide technical support to Think Tank events. The *Executive Committee* directs and manages the African Fisheries Think Tank process and ensures that policy recommendations and syntheses are provided to the *Advisory Council*. The Advisory Council informs CAMFA and takes policy messages to political level (including AUC). The *CAMFA Secretariat* is hosted by AU-IBAR, with overall responsibility for CAMFA events; monitoring CAMFA decision implementation. The constituent organs (Executive Committee, Advisory Council and CAMFA Secretariat) facilitate the process of institutional collaboration and sector coordination



The entry point for the Regional NSA Platforms in the AFRM is at the level of Regional and Country work.
It is envisaged to have a continental NSA Fisheries and Aquaculture Platform which will be affiliated to the Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO), that was established to serve as an interface between the African Union and farmers associations

Conclusion

Increasing role of NSAs, coupled with the legitimacy afforded them through their respective Regional Platforms and linkage to African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM), implies that they are co-owners of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa and are equally critical to the effective implementation of the PFRS, due in part to:

- Their ability to tap, effectively and legitimately, into societies reservoirs of social capital than organizations imposed from above
- Their ability to develop innovative solutions through undertaking pilot projects on a small scale.
- Their capacity to pioneering innovative approaches, disseminate these approaches and scale up the effort so that it can make a measure of impact on the vast numbers of poor and powerless fishers, fish farmers and producers.
- Their ability to do more with less. Typically, NSAs require less financial inputs than government agencies and therefore are more cost effective - an attribute that is important in financially constrained countries.
- NSAs being more resourceful and innovative as they involve local communities in the identification and resolution of development problems which are more cost effective, more sustainable, and more compatible with community values and norms.

Over and above these direct development roles, NSAs also have a very important advocacy role to play in promoting effective governance.

Further Reading

1. Report of the Coordination Meeting for Regional Non-State-Actors Organizations active in fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa, 6 – 8 August, 2015; Nairobi, Kenya; AU-IBAR Nairobi, Kenya.
2. ***Draft Report:*** Workshop on the establishment of the east Africa Platform of non-State-actors in fisheries and aquaculture sector (EARFISH), 18-19 April, 2017, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, AU-IBAR, Nairobi, Kenya.
3. Rules of Procedure for the East African Platform for NSAs in fisheries and aquaculture, April 2017; AU-IBAR, Nairobi, Kenya
4. ***Draft Report:*** Implementation Workshop to establish the Regional Platform of non-State-actors (NSAs) in West Africa, 19-21 September, 2016 Lomé, Togo; AU-IBAR Nairobi, Kenya.
5. Statutes of the Regional Platform of Non-State-Actors in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in West Africa, 2016.

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