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Fishing for Sustainable Livelihoods in Angola: The Co-operative Approach

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the fisheries sector in Angola. In particular, it considers the potential role for co-operatives in artisanal fisheries governance in Angola. Around two-thirds of fishers in that country are employed in the artisanal subsector.¹ In Angola, co-operatives are the preferred vehicle for structuring stakeholder interaction in the subsector. The role of co-operatives is also considered in the light of research findings that indicate that, when it comes to governance, institutions (and in the case of common-pool resources, particularly local institutions) matter.² By definition, co-operatives are voluntary 'bottom-up' enterprises characterised by mutual self-help. At their best, these unique institutional characteristics mean that co-operatives have the potential to marry the value rationality of civil society with the efficiency rationality of the market. However, turning the governance potential of co-operatives into reality requires a careful consideration of context-specific opportunities and challenges. The paper begins by situating fisheries governance within wider theories of natural resource governance. It then outlines the international context of fisheries governance, and in particular, artisanal fisheries worldwide. It then describes Angola's fish stocks and regulatory environment, before focusing on co-operatives in Angola's artisanal fishing sector. The paper concludes that fisheries co-operatives' greatest governance contribution is the way in which they can enhance local-national linkages. This happens as a previously informal sector gradually formalises. Throughout the process, it is important to respect and support the unique institutional characteristics of co-operatives.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCLME	Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem
ECP	Estratégia de Combate à Pobreza (Strategy to Combat Poverty)
EEZs	exclusive economic zones
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (United Nations)
GDP	gross domestic product
IBEP	Inquérito sobre o Bem Estar da População (Integrated Inquiry into People's Well-Being)
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPA	Instituto de Desenvolvimento da Pesca Artesanal (Institute for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture)
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Plan
IUU fishing	illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing
LIFDC	low-income food deficit country
NCBA	National Cooperative Business Association
NGO	non-governmental organisation
TAC	total allowable catch
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNACA	Angolan Confederation of Peasants Associations and Farming Co-operatives
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

INTRODUCTION

‘Having no meat is not a big deal in Angola. But when there is no fish, or there is a shortage of fish, it becomes a political issue.’

Dr Salomão Xirimimbi, Angolan minister of fisheries³

If governed well, Angola’s ocean, like its fertile land, has the potential to contribute significantly to improved livelihoods and food security after decades of war and displacement. Yet politics has long decided who benefits from the natural resource wealth of the country. Fish, like oil and diamonds, are a bounty that should be shared by all, rather than exploited by a few in an unequal society. The sustainable governance of this resource is a political issue with local, national and global dimensions. This paper specifically aims to explore the potential role of co-operatives in the governance of the artisanal fisheries subsector in Angola. The importance of artisanal fisheries for Angola is reflected in the fact that around two-thirds of fishers in the country earn their living as artisanal fishers. Furthermore, Angola prefers to structure stakeholder engagement in this subsector through co-operatives.

Following a brief theoretical section, this paper discusses the international context in which fisheries governance takes place. This discussion moves from the broader global fisheries context to the more specific one of artisanal fisheries. It introduces co-operatives as a possible institutional solution to the governance of this subsector. The paper then focuses on Angolan fisheries from the national to the local levels. It is argued that the relations between government and user groups structured through co-operatives could potentially serve as an example of fisheries co-management. Co-operatives are identified as particularly useful in formalising an informal sector. However, the history of Angola — and specifically of co-operatives in Angola — leads to particular challenges for the realisation of these institutions’ governance potential. It is recommended that both the Angolan government and its international partners respect and support the unique institutional character of co-operatives as voluntary ‘bottom-up’ enterprises characterised by mutual self-help.

FISHERIES GOVERNANCE: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Fisheries and natural resource governance

In the search for generalities, theories of natural resource governance risk losing sight of the specific features of different resources. Like minerals and oil, fish have the potential to contribute to economic development. However, as an industry, fisheries are more labour intensive than the mining sector. Whereas globally the large-scale fisheries sector employs an estimated 500 000 fishers, small-scale fisheries provide direct employment to over 50 million fishers, who support at least 450 million dependants.⁴ This attests the contribution of fisheries, and particularly of small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to local livelihoods.

Quite obviously, unlike minerals and oil, fish are food. The sector therefore contributes directly to food security in Africa. It is a renewable resource; but only if it is governed

sustainably. Fish are a source of animal protein. Unlike livestock, however, most fish are caught in the wild. Capture fisheries are therefore less like livestock farms and more like hunting and gathering businesses. The ocean is the quintessential 'common pool', making marine fisheries a prime example of a common-pool resource. Common-pool resources include 'natural and human-constructed resources in which (1) exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is especially costly, and (2) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability for others'.⁵ These characteristics present particular governance challenges.

Forests, like fisheries, are common-pool resources. Like trees, fish form part of larger ecosystems and therefore cannot be studied in isolation from their environment. The study of common-pool resources like fisheries and forests is increasingly being seen as part of a school of thought labelled 'complex systems' thinking.⁶ One of the many factors that contribute to this complexity is that ecosystems are diverse. This diversity refers both (1) to the fact that one ecosystem differs from another, and (2) to the diversity of all the parts that make up a single system. These different parts are interconnected. In addition, not only are these systems complex, but they are also dynamic and adaptive. The governance of resources such as fisheries and forests take place at the intersection of one complex adaptive system (an ecosystem) with another (a social system). The complexity of fisheries systems makes them difficult to predict and control, which in turn means that often fisheries governance occurs in a context of uncertainty.⁷

Finally, fish have been described as a 'fugitive resource'. Unlike trees, which stay planted in one spot, fish swim. This means that fish do not respect human-drawn boundaries, even those like the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) that stretch right into the sea. Governing fish therefore entails steering diverse fugitive resources in complex adaptive systems (ecosystems) by means of other complex adaptive systems (social systems), often in a context of uncertainty. If done well, the resource has the potential to contribute significantly to sustainable economic development, local livelihoods and food security. Unfortunately, the collapsed state of many of the world's fisheries proves that too often governance of this precious resource has failed.

Plenty more fish in the sea?

For most of history, the fish in the sea have been taken for granted. The principle of the 'freedom of the seas' has been enshrined in customary international law since the time of Grotius's *Mare Liberum* in 1609.⁸ The international community only parted from this principle in 1982 with the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),⁹ which, among other things, made provision for the establishment of EEZs. Such EEZs entitled states henceforth to claim sovereign jurisdiction over an area stretching 200 nautical miles to seaward from an agreed-upon baseline.¹⁰ The rationale behind granting EEZs was not so much to assign to states the responsibility for ensuring that resource extraction was conducted sustainably as it was to assign to them the right to capture benefits from natural resources found in their territories.

The realisation that the ocean is not inexhaustible is a relatively recent one. Early warning signs were largely ignored¹¹ and, up until as late as the 1980s, the primary goal of fisheries governance remained the maximisation of economic benefits from the exploitation of the ocean.¹² In the second half of the twentieth century, the global rush

for fish was spurred on by growing recognition of the nutritional benefits of seafood. In practice, these pressures often translated into efforts to catch more fish and to do so more efficiently. This led to the so-called 'blue revolution',¹³ a time in which human capabilities to exploit the seas came to outstrip those of the ocean to renew its stocks.

In the short time between the signing of the UNCLOS (1982) and its coming into force (1994), it became clear that a new fisheries paradigm was emerging. Questioning of the old, easy assumptions mentioned above was no doubt triggered by the levelling of the world fish catch in the 1990s.¹⁴ Compared to earlier times, when the two-thirds of the earth's surface covered in water could adapt to human impact, a free-for-all was quickly becoming less and less sustainable. As improved fishing technology served to open up ever increasing parts of the ocean for exploitation, better governance of global fisheries became imperative. It was soon realised that in the long term, fisheries can only be economically sustainable if they are also ecologically sustainable. This led to the adoption in 1995 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Over time, fisheries governance shifted from market governance to hierarchical governance. The ideal types of 'market' and 'hierarchy' lie on opposite ends of a 'types of governance' continuum.¹⁵ Whereas markets refer to orders that emerge spontaneously from the self-co-ordination of autonomous actors, hierarchies refer to those orders that co-ordinate social action by using command and control mechanisms.¹⁶ In between these ideal types lie several hybrid models. When it came to fisheries governance, it was not long before the realisation emerged that neither natural systems nor many social systems react particularly well to top-down command and control.

Experience has taught that most fishery systems based on open access have failed and so have attempts at top-down control coupled with a poor ability to monitor them.¹⁷ Many past assumptions about fisheries governance have also been blown out the water. For instance, examples of users devising long-term, sustainable solutions for governing fisheries have served to debunk the argument that the only successful solutions for governing a common-pool resource (such as a fishery) are those imposed on users by external authorities.¹⁸ Yet there are also examples where users have governed fisheries to the point of collapse.¹⁹ In some instances, local co-operatives have proven successful,²⁰ whereas in others, the government continues to play a strong and largely successful role.²¹ Contemporary research extols the virtues (and sometimes also the caveats and challenges) of such regimes as co-management,²² self-governance²³ and interactive governance.²⁴

All of this should not lead to the conclusion that results are random, which would render any attempt to design governance models useless. It simply means that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. In this sense, it is advisable not to speak of 'the answer' or 'the model', but instead of context-specific governance solutions. Recognising that fisheries governance happens at the intersection of two complex systems, namely a natural system and a social system, is the first step in the search for such solutions. This paper is able to draw on considerable advances that have already been made in understanding some of the governance challenges and possible solutions related to this renewable, yet depletable resource.

Big fish; small fry

Although states have a mandate to make decisions about the 200 nautical miles of their EEZs, the need for regional and even international co-operation should be clear from the discussion above. However, unlike a state, the international system is anarchical. There is no hierarchy of states and no overarching sovereign power. Therefore, beyond the national level, fisheries policies consist of bilateral and multilateral agreements in international law. At the international level, for instance, states could sign on to UNCLOS or the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. In an attempt to clamp down on bad operators and to close loopholes related to the above, there are initiatives that aim to reduce illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU fishing).²⁵

These issues are relevant to both the developed and developing world. The depletion of fish stocks in places like Europe is leading many developed countries to conclude fisheries agreements with states in the developing world. Added to this is a growing interest in such contracts from Asian players. The clampdown on illegal industrial-scale fishing is also an important issue in developing countries, which often face severe capacity constraints in terms of monitoring and implementation. Even as they have limited capacity, developing states have additional issues to consider. Fishing is not always practised on an industrial scale. Whereas globally the large-scale fisheries sector employs an estimated 500 000 fishers, small-scale fisheries provide direct employment to over 50 million fishers, who support at least 450 million dependants.²⁶ It is often the case that the less industrialised a state is, the greater the share of its population that depends on artisanal activities, including artisanal mining, agriculture and fishing. In developing countries, artisanal fishing activities often contribute significantly to the livelihoods of coastal communities. Thus while small-scale and artisanal fishing are not limited to the developing world, it is in these states that their contribution to local livelihoods is most pronounced.

McClanahan *et al.* analyse a cross-section of progressive small-scale fisheries around the world and consider the different institutional arrangements employed in finding solutions to socio-ecological challenges faced by these fisheries.²⁷ These arrangements are furthermore divided into so-called 'institutional' and 'operational' solutions. Operational solutions include such things as spatio-temporal restrictions and input and output controls (quotas, equipment restrictions, etc.). Operational solutions therefore refer to constraints on actors' actions or operations, especially as they relate to the natural resource. In this context, institutional solutions refer to the way in which actors in the governance landscape relate to one another, i.e. the way in which their interactions are structured.²⁸

Interestingly, the abovementioned study found no indication in the fisheries studied that specific operational solutions are more common than others, save for permanent closed areas that are used regularly for ecological improvements.²⁹ In terms of institutional solutions, however, participatory processes, different forms of co-management and outside pressures (from local or international non-governmental organisations [NGOs], for instance) are quite common.³⁰ In its broadest sense, co-management refers to the sharing of authority and responsibility for governance among government and other stakeholders. The concept has been accused of being 'widely used but poorly defined'.³¹ Even as researchers admit this, they have been reluctant to settle on a single definition. Often, co-management is represented on a scale developed by Sen and Nielsen,³² where it covers most governance systems between the 'extremes' of top-down

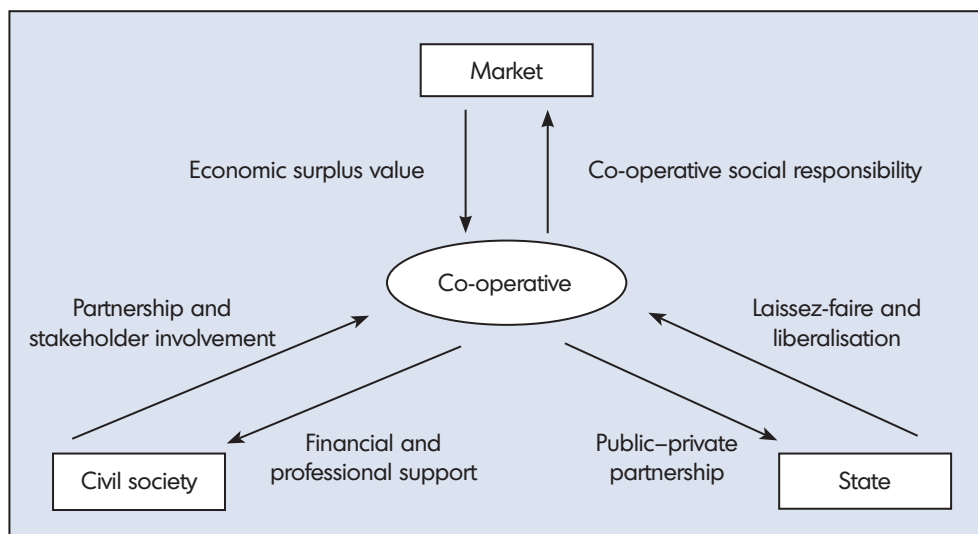
government-based governance and user group-based self-governance. In line with the fact that this scale actually describes systems of governance rather than simply management, authors like Kooiman and Bavinck refer not to ‘co-management’, but to ‘co-governance’.³³ The interactions between government and user groups range from one where the role of government is instructive, through consultative, co-operative and advisory roles, to one where it is informative.

While individual fisheries governance solutions remain context specific, there is an emerging consensus that some participation of actors who have a stake in the outcome (i.e. stakeholders) is required. When it comes to artisanal and small-scale fisheries, involving those whose actions have the biggest impact on decisions in decision-making and devising rules that they agree with increase the likelihood of compliance and reduce cost.³⁴ As Bavinck *et al.* argue, ‘[t]he question is not so much whether [stakeholders] should be included in governance (they are already there), but rather how to include them in ways that maximise their synergy to the benefit of governance’.³⁵ In a similar way, Hilborn *et al.* argue that the aim of fisheries governance should be to create systems in which the individual welfare of stakeholders (fishers, managers and scientists, for instance) is maximised by actions that contribute to a desirable outcome for society as a whole.³⁶

Co-operatives: The bigger picture

A co-operative can be defined as ‘an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise’.³⁷ At their best, co-operatives have the potential to marry the value rationality of civil society organisations with the efficiency rationality of the market.³⁸ The unique character of co-operatives flow from the importance such organisations attach to values often cherished by civil society,³⁹ even as they try to realise them through business operations. As such, co-operatives can serve as conduits for a so-called ‘soft-business approach’ to development. The ‘dual character’ of co-operatives carries with it opportunities as well as challenges. Some have even gone beyond mentioning a dual character to describing them as facing a ‘co-operative trilemma’.⁴⁰ This trilemma refers to the position co-operatives occupy among the state, market and civil society, and the relations they have with these three spheres.⁴¹ Figure 1 provides an oversight of the challenges co-operatives face, as well as the way in which they have responded to them.

Co-operatives have been found in both the developing and developed world,⁴² and in such diverse sectors as agriculture, credit, education, housing and fisheries. From its emergence in the nineteenth century to today, the co-operative movement has gone through periods of optimistic booms followed by shocks or disillusionment and adjustment. Some of the ways in which co-operatives have adjusted are included in Figure 1 on page 10. Today, there is a renewed interest in this institutional form. This renewed interest occurs in the context of a changing role for the state and the inclusion of non-state actors in the areas of both governance and development. In the developing world, three distinct phases of co-operative development have been identified, with today’s co-operatives distinguished from earlier ones characterised first by colonial paternalism, and then by post-colonial populism and nationalism.⁴³

Figure 1: The co-operative trilemma

Source: Gijssels C & P Develtere, *op. cit.*

In terms of the fisheries sector, co-operatives are found in countries as diverse as Canada, India, Chile, Korea, Libya, Kenya, Senegal and Angola. In most countries where fisheries co-operatives exist, they include artisanal fishers. However, in some areas — particularly in the Asia-Pacific region — even large commercial fisheries function along co-operative lines. So, for instance, in Japan, fishing rights are granted exclusively to fisheries co-operatives, meaning that all fishers are members of co-operatives.⁴⁴

McClanahan *et al.* would encourage the grouping together of individuals involved in fisheries and a formalisation of their trade, especially in small-scale fisheries, where, they argue,⁴⁵

efforts at professionalizing and not just the implementation of rules or purchasing of tools are likely to have more long-term effects than any specific management and should be seen as a key and cost-effective area of involvement of governments, conservation and development organizations, and donors.

They further argue that professionalisation plays an important role in ensuring that fisheries development is both socio-economically and ecologically sustainable. The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) adds that co-operatives, as professional people's organisations, are ideally placed to implement activities relating to environmental protection and sustainable development.

The preamble to Co-operative Agenda 21⁴⁶ — an agenda for sustainable development adopted by the ICA in the wake of UN Agenda 21 — quotes chapter 14.16 of UN Agenda 21, which states: 'The greater the degree of community control over the resources on which it relies, the greater will be the incentive for economic and human resource development.'⁴⁷ Considering that UN Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action for sustainable development, it would be safe to include the word 'sustainable' in the above quotation. As membership-based organisations, co-operatives can go some way in dealing

with one of the key challenges of a commons such as a fishery: restricting access. One way they can do this is by working with governments and other monitoring agencies to monitor unauthorised infiltration of foreign fishing fleets.⁴⁸ Acting as a link between public infrastructure providers (government) and resource users (those involved in the artisanal fisheries subsector), co-operatives have the potential to contribute to the robustness of social-ecological systems.⁴⁹ As such, the relations between government and user groups, structured through co-operatives, could serve as an example of co-management.

GOVERNING ANGOLA'S FISH

Angola has a coastline of about 1 650km. It is along this coastline that the cold Benguela current from the south meets the warmer Angola current from the north. The upwelling caused by the meeting of these two diverging currents creates an environment conducive to fisheries. The Angolan coastline can roughly be divided into 'north' and 'south'. This is also reflected in the country's membership of both the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), which includes South Africa and Namibia to the south, and the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem, which reaches up to The Gambia in the north. Fishing takes place all along the Angolan coast, but is particularly concentrated in the so-called 'southern fishing zone', which stretches from Lobito to the mouth of the Cunene River. That being said, the greatest number of organised artisanal fishing communities are found in the northern provinces.

Angola's most important exploitable marine resources include pilchard and the Cape and Cunene horse mackerel. *Sardinella* is fished in parallel with horse mackerel. Demersal species from the *Sparidae* (includes breams), *Scianidae* (includes drums) and *Merllucidae* (includes most hake species) families are also caught. Other species include tuna (seasonal), some marine shrimp and deep-water crustaceans.⁵⁰ Stock surveys indicate an exploitable biomass of around 700 000 tonnes per annum, but a cautious approach by the Ministry of Fisheries reduced this to 560 000 tonnes.⁵¹ Every year, the Angolan Fisheries Research Institute does biomass assessments of the main species and then suggests total allowable catch (TAC) limits to the fisheries minister.⁵² In 2003, for instance, Angola's TAC for demersal and pelagic species was set at 57 600 and 160 000 tonnes, respectively.⁵³ A portion of the TAC is allocated to the artisanal subsector.⁵⁴

Between 1996 and 2003 more detailed biomass estimates indicate a decline in the estimates of total fish biomass, involving a decline in the estimated biomass of all fish groups except *Sardinella*.⁵⁵ This indicates that catches may have been unsustainable.⁵⁶ A different statistical analysis of data specifically from the artisanal subsector between 2002 and 2005 at first appeared to be more optimistic, with only one of the ten species considered during the study showing a clear decline over the period considered and most showing an upturn.⁵⁷ The second study, however, includes many provisos. So, for instance, it mentions that a number of difficulties were accounted in acquiring reliable data.⁵⁸

This paper does not deal with the scientific challenges of collecting and interpreting reliable data.⁵⁹ Neither does it deal with the specific operational solutions employed to ensure sustainable exploitation. It does, however, consider possible institutional solutions to fisheries governance challenges. The difficulty of making decisions in a context of uncertainty was mentioned earlier. A lack of reliable data contributes significantly to such

uncertainty, and this is exacerbated in the case of an informal sector. During the decades of war, Angola's informal sector grew as much of the formal one collapsed. As explained later, part of this 'informalisation' included a growth in the artisanal fisheries subsector. A major challenge for the governance of Angola's artisanal fisheries therefore relates to the fact that it is a subsector that until recently was in large part informal.

Angola's approach to fisheries and food security

Angola's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates are among the highest in the world,⁶⁰ even after the 2008–09 global financial crisis has taken its toll on the oil and diamond sectors. Yet despite the fact that it has outgrown its low-income country status,⁶¹ Angola is still classified as a low human development country.⁶² This can be explained in part by the legacy of a civil war lasting more than 25 years, preceded by centuries of Portuguese rule that came to an abrupt end in 1975. Other explanations point to the country as a prime example of an oil state characterised by such ills as an enclave economy, Dutch Disease and patronage politics. Without denying the magnitude of such problems, one should be wary of making glib generalisations about the country today. Angola has only been in the process of post-war reconstruction for about seven years; a time so short that many of the often-quoted (and re-quoted) development statistics for the country are still based on data collected during the war.⁶³

In the midst of many 'bad news indicators', there is, however, one measure in which it scores above recommendation: the fish consumption of Angola's population has been estimated at around 15 kilograms per head, above the 14 kilograms recommended by the World Health Organisation.⁶⁴ This attests the important role played by fish in a country classified otherwise as a low-income food deficit country (LIFDC).⁶⁵ However, this label obscures several things. Firstly, in terms of fisheries, import/export figures tell only a small part of the Angolan fisheries story. The country exports only about 5% of its total fish catch to international markets⁶⁶ and most fish are produced for domestic consumption.⁶⁷ Secondly, classifying Angola as an LIFDC obscures the country's food production potential. Before the war, Angola was self-sufficient in all food crops barring wheat, as well as the world's fourth-largest coffee producer and a top producer of sisal, sugarcane, bananas and cotton.⁶⁸ Now that there is peace, the country aims to revive this potential.

Because of the roles both the agriculture and the fisheries sectors play in addressing issues of food security, data for the two sectors is often aggregated. Food security was one of the issues underpinning the 2003 *Estratégia de Combate à Pobreza* (ECP, or Strategy to Combat Poverty), Angola's version of a poverty reduction strategy paper. In Angola, however, the ECP is little more than a piece of paper. A more useful point of departure for agriculture and food security would probably be the recently adopted Integrated Rural Development Plan (IRDP), which aims to restore the country's once booming agriculture sector and diversify the economy away from its current dependence on oil.

As its name suggests, the IRDP is an integrated plan that stretches beyond the agricultural sector to involve such sectors as business, health and education. The plan, which includes the building of schools and health centres, aims to establish rural nodes of development centred on a revamped rural farming sector. By encouraging Angolans to move back to the rural areas, the government hopes to reduce overcrowding in urban areas and in particular in the capital, Luanda — a city built for 800 000 and now bursting

at the seams with well over five million inhabitants.⁶⁹ This overcrowding is the result of both the push factor of war and the pull factor of oil wealth. Notably, the marine fisheries sector does not form part of the IRDP. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that, just as millions of Angolans poured into Luanda during the war, many relocated to the coast. It is therefore neither necessary nor advisable to encourage another major shift to the coast. Other ways in which fisheries differ from agricultural produce and livestock were mentioned earlier. That being said, one should not overemphasise these differences.

Despite the fact that the two sectors do not fall under the same integrated plan, there are important similarities in the ways they are approached by the Angolan government. In both the agricultural sector and the artisanal fisheries subsector, the government follows what could be described as a 'hardware and soft-business' approach to development — characterised by such actions as building infrastructure and encouraging microenterprise. Most notably for this paper, in both sectors the preferred vehicles of interaction between government and local communities are co-operatives. Co-operatives are also seen as a way to deal with a so-called 'culture of informality'.⁷⁰ Informality has often been considered a challenge to modernisation, which is one of the main aims of the Angolan government.

In terms of fisheries' expected contribution to economic development, Angola does not consider a blind wooing of foreign investors to be the solution. In this sector, as in others, it is evident that, even though Angola is eager for investment, it believes in setting the terms for this process. This is reflected in the government's so-called 'Angolisation' approach to economic development. 'Angolisation' is the title given to an approach that prioritises Angolan ownership and empowerment through such tools as local content requirements and incentives for investors to form joint ventures with Angolan nationals. In terms of the fishing sector,⁷¹ the approach also finds expression in the Law on Biological Aquatic Resources of 2004.⁷² According to this law — more often known simply as the 'new fisheries law' — and related regulations,⁷³ all industrial fishing activities henceforth had to be carried out in association with Angolan enterprises. In practice, this means that foreign vessels cannot fish in Angolan waters, so that those who wish to do so either have to lease their vessels to Angolan enterprises or form joint ventures with them.⁷⁴ Shortly after the new fisheries law was passed in 2004, negotiations for a renewal of an EU–Angola fisheries agreement collapsed.⁷⁵ After protracted negotiations, the EU withdrew, reflecting on what tough negotiators the Angolans are.⁷⁶ The Angolan government's signing of an alternative fisheries agreement with China indicated that that country was more willing to offer Angola what it wanted than the EU was.⁷⁷

In addition to industrial fishing, Angola's vision for fisheries provides for the promotion of the aquaculture and artisanal fisheries subsectors.⁷⁸ Although fisheries are expected to contribute to the national economy, Angola acknowledges the significant role the sector plays in the lives of local Angolans and so sees it as providing significant potential for poverty alleviation and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.⁷⁹ The contribution of fish to food security was mentioned above. What has not been mentioned yet is that, of the around 31 500 Angolans fishers, more than two-thirds earn their living as artisanal fishers.⁸⁰ These fishers provide fish primarily for the local market. Whereas it is usually men who go out to sea to catch the fish, it is women who process, market and sell it.⁸¹ Altogether, it has been estimated that up to half the Angolan population depend on fisheries for a significant part of their livelihoods.⁸² Clearly, it is in the artisanal subsector that the impact of fisheries on local Angolan livelihoods is most pronounced.

The artisanal fisheries subsector in Angola

The law, the plan and the artisan

In 2004 Angola passed the Law on Biological Aquatic Resources. This law — more often known simply as the 'new fisheries law' — includes provision for artisanal fisheries. In fact, of the three BCLME countries (Angola, South Africa and Namibia), Angola is the one that makes the most explicit provision for artisanal fishers in its regulatory framework.⁸³

In addition to recreational fisheries and scientific research fisheries, Angola's fisheries law distinguishes among four types of fisheries, i.e. subsistence, artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fisheries. Different regulations apply to the different categories. Subsistence fishers are classified as those who fish for non-commercial purposes, including for family consumption. Under Article 1.55, artisans are classified as those who fish for commercial purposes and whose boats are 14 metres or less in length. Artisanal fishing vessels can be propelled by sails, paddles or engines, and fishers can use equipment ranging from hand lines to gill nets and entangling nets. Semi-industrial boats can be up to 20 metres long, while all vessels in excess of 20 metres are classified as industrial fishing vessels. According to the law, semi-industrial and industrial fishing cannot take place in the first four nautical miles from the shore. This area is reserved for small-scale fishers, including those who fish for recreational and research purposes, subsistence fishers, and artisans. As part of measures implemented for monitoring, control and surveillance, the fisheries law makes provision for community observers. These observers are appointed as monitors in areas reserved for subsistence and artisanal fisheries.⁸⁴

The artisanal subsector is also prioritised in a so-called Fishery Master Plan, which describes it as having the potential to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security. This plan was developed under the Nansen Programme based on a co-operation agreement concluded between Norway and Angola in 1998. Although both the process of preparing the plan and the plan itself have been described in positive terms, the final implementation phase was not undertaken. Instead, the plan became assimilated into the broader planning agenda and specifically into Angola's poverty reduction strategy and longer-term strategies for food security.⁸⁵ A specific investment programme for the artisanal subsector was launched in 2000. This ambitious programme is financed mainly with national funds, with limited support from partners. The programme consists of support for the organisation of fishing communities in the form of co-operatives and small enterprises often financed with local microcredit schemes, combined with investments in infrastructure and training centred round new and rehabilitated fisheries-supporting centres.⁸⁶

The Institute for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (Instituto de Desenvolvimento da Pesca Artesanal — IPA) is responsible for the implementation of the artisanal fisheries plan. The IPA was created in 1992. It falls under the Ministry of Fisheries, but has economic and administrative autonomy. Its mandate includes the promotion of artisanal fisheries through the development of co-operatives, training and community development, technical assistance projects, administration of subsidies and credit facilities, and monitoring. The IPA is based in Launda, but also has provincial delegations. Altogether, it comprises more than 200 people, about a quarter of whom are based in the capital and the rest in the provinces.⁸⁷

It is striking to note that an estimated 94% of all marine fishers live and work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,⁸⁸ i.e. the developing world. The fact that, worldwide, artisanal fishers by far outnumber those involved in the industrial sector was mentioned earlier. The contribution of fisheries to local livelihoods is even more pronounced in a post-conflict state like Angola, where decades of war led to large-scale shifts in the population. During the war, many Angolans moved to the coastal regions, resulting in a situation where the artisanal fisheries subsector grew even as the industrial subsector collapsed.⁸⁹

It follows that the less formally developed a state, the more likely it is that the term ‘artisan’ denotes informality. In fisheries, as in other sectors of the Angolan economy barring that of oil, a collapse of the formal economy during wartime was coupled with an expansion in the informal economy.⁹⁰ A large informal sector provides potential for entrepreneurship. In Angola’s capital Luanda, proof of a thriving entrepreneurialism is found at the Roque Santeiro market, which is home to tens of thousands of vendors and is the largest open-air market in Angola and one of the largest on the continent. However, informality also presents serious challenges both to those who form part of the informal economy and those attempting to govern it. That the informal sector is proving a thorny issue in Angola is illustrated by the government’s recent attempt to ban street vendors, and by the backlash this attempt caused.⁹¹

Co-operatives as institutional solution for artisanal fisheries in Angola

When it comes to the governance of a common-pool resource, one cannot assume that the only solutions to problems are those imposed on users by external authorities. Some of the leading scholars of commons governance argue that ‘locally evolved institutional arrangements governed by stable communities and buffered from outside forces have sustained resources successfully for centuries’.⁹² However, it is acknowledged that these arrangements often fail when they are subjected to rapid change.⁹³ Central to the above quotation are the phrases ‘stable communities’ and ‘buffered from outside forces’. In Angola today, neither of these conditions holds. The war has led to large-scale population movements, often to the coast, so disrupting the stability of coastal communities. Indeed, local institutions were subject to several disruptions even before the war, including both the start of foreign occupation and its abrupt end in 1975. Colonialism meant that communities were in contact with and destabilised by outside forces for centuries. Today, as fish stocks in the developed world dwindle, growing pressure on the world’s remaining fisheries resources translates into an ever-increasing array of outside pressures on fishing communities in countries like Angola.

For these reasons, there is some role for a public institution such as the state in Angola’s fisheries governance landscape. However — and especially when it comes to the governance of artisanal fisheries — it is imperative also to involve other stakeholders, particularly those at the local level, whose actions impact directly on the resource. In Angola, co-operatives are the preferred vehicle for structuring stakeholder interaction. This section will consider both the opportunities and challenges faced by artisanal fisheries co-operatives in the Angolan context. The paper will end with a few suggestions for turning co-operatives’ governance potential into reality.

Today, around 102 fishing communities can be identified along the Angolan coast, and fishing co-operatives have been established in many of these communities. Although

the promotion of co-operatives by the IPA programme has led to a growth in fisheries co-operatives since 2000, these types of institutions are not new to Angola. The first fisheries co-operative in the country was established in 1978.⁹⁴ It is important to note that in Angola, as in other African countries, the co-operatives operate in an environment that is both culturally and institutionally influenced by past developments. African co-operative models are largely inherited from colonialism and, as such, they carry a legacy that conditions their path.⁹⁵

Despite the fact that the first fisheries co-operative in Angola was established three years after independence, the overall co-operative movement could not help but be influenced by the Portuguese co-operative legacy. During colonial times, Portuguese co-operative legislation regulating the sector in both Portugal and its colonies was restrictive and characterised by heavy state intervention. In Lusophone Mozambique, for instance, an attempt to escape the legacy of the past is illustrated by the fact that co-operative-type fishery organisations in that country are no longer called co-operatives.⁹⁶

Agricultural co-operatives established in Angola during colonial times were often merely the functional rural arms of semi-public enterprises such as the Coffee Institute of Angola. Even after independence, under the influence of state socialism, co-operatives were promoted as semi-public enterprises.⁹⁷ Interviews in Angola confirmed the lasting influence of a socialist, top-down co-operative legacy. So, for instance, it was explained that the formation of co-operatives is usually not the result of an internal motivation to pool resources, but rather to get financial assistance/support from government and non-governmental organisations.⁹⁸

The kinds of organisations described above are quite different from those described by the globally preferred definition: co-operatives as voluntary 'bottom-up' enterprises characterised by mutual self-help. Although no general post-colonial law has been passed in Angola to date, a draft law has been submitted to the National Assembly.⁹⁹ This draft law indicates a departure from the old path: in line with international trends, it has a decidedly business-oriented slant that places co-operatives in a larger development context of small and medium-sized enterprise development.¹⁰⁰ The draft law emphasises the independent and voluntary nature of co-operatives and stresses the principles of economic participation of members, control by members and independence from aid organisations.¹⁰¹ Once this general law has been passed, it will be followed up with sector-specific supporting legislation and decrees. For instance, the Statute of Fishing Co-operatives of 1987¹⁰² would need to be modified to conform to a new co-operatives law.

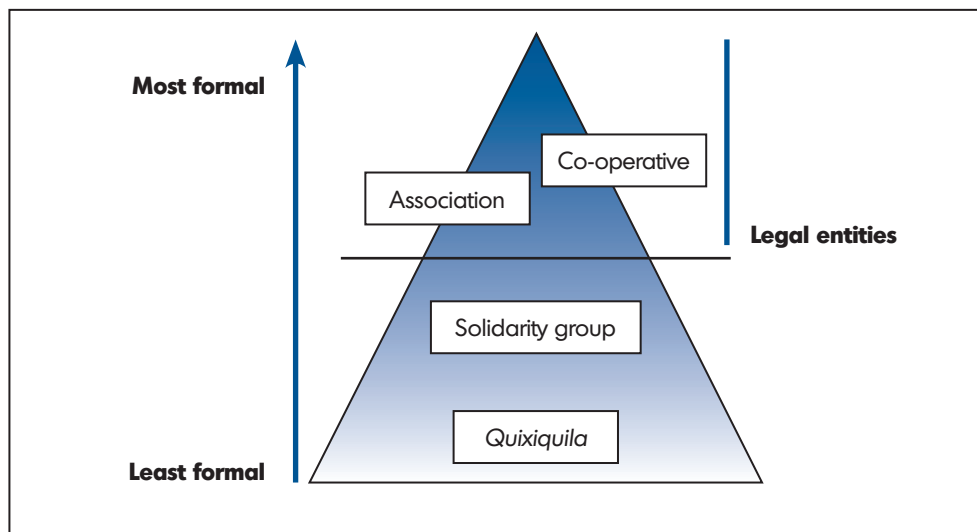
A general co-operatives law would go some way in dealing with some of the definitional disagreements and confusions that currently exist. For instance, in Angola there is a law that regulates associations.¹⁰³ The idea is that co-operatives differ from associations largely in the fact that they are allowed to make a profit, i.e. co-operatives can have a business orientation. However, as it stands, there is some confusion about this. A law should also harmonise the (current) process(es) of registering as a co-operative. This should prevent stories like that of a group of 50 displaced people for whom it took two years of ever-escalating costs to register a co-operative.¹⁰⁴ Simplifying the co-operative law is one step towards creating an enabling environment for a 'soft-business' approach to development. Other aspects include the creation of a one-stop shop for starting a business (called *Guiché Único de Empresas*)¹⁰⁵ and simplifying access to credit for small enterprises through microfinance initiatives.¹⁰⁶ However, when it comes to changing course, changing the law

is only the first step. A new law does not automatically translate into new ways of doing things.

Experience in Angola has shown that clamping down on the informal sector with harsh laws and rules tends to be unsuccessful. Much like policy for attracting foreign direct investment, part of the answer lies in creating an enabling environment by reducing the costs and time required for compliance.¹⁰⁷ Instead of shutting out the informal or attempting to force it into a rigid formal mode, it would make more sense to gradually draw the informal into the formal sector. The 2009 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor identified Angola as having one of the highest rates of early-stage entrepreneurship.¹⁰⁸ While this is a positive development, informal entrepreneurs also face challenges. Formalisation of this entrepreneurialism will only happen if and when entrepreneurs perceive it to be in their self-interest.¹⁰⁹ In a country lacking a strong social contract between the government and its citizens,¹¹⁰ it is even more important to ‘emphasise the carrot at the expense of the stick’.¹¹¹ The IPA appears to be doing well in this regard. Rather than act as a policing agency, it focuses on assisting the creation of sustainable co-operatives by providing training and supporting them as they apply for funding, mostly in the form of soft loans and microfinance.¹¹²

It has furthermore been suggested that formalisation should happen through intermediaries. The IPA, which falls under the Ministry of Fisheries, but remains administratively and financially independent, is well placed to play such an intermediary role. In addition, the suggestion made above refers also to an approach of working with ‘individuals and associations with one foot in the informal and the other in the formal sector’,¹¹³ such as small business associations, for instance. The Kenyan small tea-growers association is mentioned as an example.¹¹⁴

In Angola, one way to bridge the gap between formal and informal institutions could be to design and build co-operatives on other, less-formal mutual self-help institutions. In co-operatives jargon, such informal organisations are sometimes referred to as ‘pre-co-ops’.¹¹⁵ In the past, even though such institutions existed, they were largely ignored by those creating co-operatives.¹¹⁶ This is a pity, considering that these are true bottom-up institutions of co-operation. Examples of such mutual self-help institutions include *stokvels* in South Africa, *idir* in Ethiopia and *tontines* in Cameroon.¹¹⁷ In Angola, the most informal mutual self-help institutions are known as *quixiquila*.¹¹⁸ Slightly more formal are so-called ‘solidarity clubs’.¹¹⁹ Solidarity clubs are not legal entities, but are often recognised by banks for purposes of providing credit.¹²⁰ Associations and co-operatives are both legally recognised entities (the main differences between them were described above). In some cases, co-operatives can be considered ‘more formalised’ than associations¹²¹ (as illustrated in Figure 2 on page 18). Even though the informal institutions are more common in stable communities (i.e. less common along the coast), they are still familiar to Angolans. In the case of fisheries, the IPA encourages individuals to form co-operatives with those they trust (friends or family, for instance).¹²² This is important, as it builds on the social capital that exists,¹²³ even in a country where much was destroyed during the war.

Figure 2: Institutions for mutual self-help in Angola

Engaging Angola

In general, Angola is willing to engage the international community, but on its own terms. The Angolan government knows exactly what it wants and what it doesn't want. In terms of assistance, it seems to react best to that of a technical kind, while being particularly wary of anything smelling of political interference.¹²⁴ In an interview, it was explained, for instance, that the Portuguese words for 'politics' and 'policy' are the same.¹²⁵ This, coupled with the fact that Angolans have been described as excellent negotiators and adept politicians,¹²⁶ goes some way in explaining Angola's dislike of outside 'policy' advice. However, constructive suggestions are often considered and might find their way into future policies as Angolan plans.¹²⁷ From the international community's side, many have burnt their fingers in dealing with Angola. While some international NGOs are good at dealing with emergencies or with weak governments, many outside development actors find it difficult to engage a 'rich-poor' country like Angola.¹²⁸ It is a country that, even as it is classified as 'middle income', is faced with grave development challenges. Also, the fact that it is not dependent on aid means that aid conditionalities have less leverage here than in most other African states. Often, Angola can afford to choose the kind of assistance it prefers.

Although the IPA's programme for artisanal fisheries (Programa de Fomento e Desenvolvimento da Pesca Artesanal) would benefit from external assistance, in order to ensure sustainability, it would be wise to think carefully and innovatively about appropriate kinds of assistance for the different aspects of this programme. As mentioned earlier, co-operatives of the past have often been hijacked by other interests, including those of the colonial or post-colonial state. Co-operatives have also been used by international NGOs as vehicles through which to distribute aid money. This too undermines the character of co-operatives as sustainable self-help organisations. In the fisheries sector, the IPA is learning these lessons as it goes along. So it was found, for instance, that a co-operative established with aid money¹²⁹ faced challenges of sustainability when the money supply

runs out, whereas one established primarily through a soft loan¹³⁰ is showing greater signs of success.¹³¹

This does not negate the need for assistance, and specifically the need for technical assistance, including training in aspects such as co-operative management.¹³² One suggestion for funding the development of the artisanal subsector was that a development levy of several per cent be placed on the gross income of the industrial sector.¹³³ It would also pay to consider opportunities for North–South and South–South co-operative development partnerships. In this regard, closer links with the Co-operative Organisation of Portuguese-Speaking Countries is recommended. Membership of this organisation includes governmental bodies, co-operative federations and apex bodies, as well as individual co-operatives. In addition to Portuguese-speaking countries, the organisation also seeks to establish linkages with state organisations dealing with co-operatives in the EU and Latin American Spanish-speaking countries.¹³⁴ Through this organisation, Angolan fisheries co-operatives could, for instance, establish linkages with Chile,¹³⁵ where the co-operative sector is mature and where fisheries co-operatives in particular have proven successful.¹³⁶ It would also be worthwhile establishing linkages with co-operative organisations in the Southern African region, and specifically in South Africa.

Lastly, it is suggested that the IPA consider Northern co-operative development support or development agencies, such as Norcoop (Norway), the Swedish Co-operative Centre, Rabobank Foundation (The Netherlands), the Canadian Co-operative Association, the National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives (Federcoopesca, part of Confcooperative, Italy) and Japanese fisheries co-operatives. These agencies offer opportunities for support ranging from the provision of technical assistance and the exchange of expertise, through the secondment of consultants, to the provision of grants, loans and participation in risk-bearing capital.¹³⁷

CONCLUSION

Artisanal fisheries have the potential to contribute significantly to food security and sustainable livelihoods in Angola. It was noted, however, that fisheries are only economically sustainable if they are also ecologically sustainable. Governing fisheries for sustainability is a challenge the world over. There are many factors that contribute to this challenge, one of which is uncertainty. Uncertainty is exacerbated in a post-conflict state like Angola, where an informal artisanal fisheries subsector grew as the industrial subsector collapsed.

Even before the end of the war, Angola launched a programme for the development of the artisanal fisheries sector. The government's approach to both the artisanal fisheries and the agricultural sectors was described as a 'hardware and soft-business' approach to development. This paper considered one aspect of the artisanal fisheries development programme, namely the organisation of fishing communities in the form of co-operatives. The unique institutional characteristics of co-operatives mean that they could marry the value rationality of civil society with the efficiency rationality of the market. This makes them good conduits for a soft-business approach to development.

In governance terms, co-operatives were identified as a possible institutional solution for Angola's artisanal fisheries subsector. Fisheries co-operatives' greatest potential

governance contribution relates to the way in which they enhance local–national linkages. The relations between government and user groups, structured through co-operatives, could potentially serve as an example of fisheries co-management. Co-operatives were also identified as particularly useful for formalising an informal sector, so reducing some of the uncertainty mentioned above. However, the history of Angola — and specifically of co-operatives in Angola — leads to particular challenges for the realisation of these institutions' governance potential. It is recommended that both the Angolan government and its international partners respect and support the unique institutional character of co-operatives as voluntary 'bottom-up' enterprises characterised by mutual self-help.

ENDNOTES

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