



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOOD PROCESS, THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

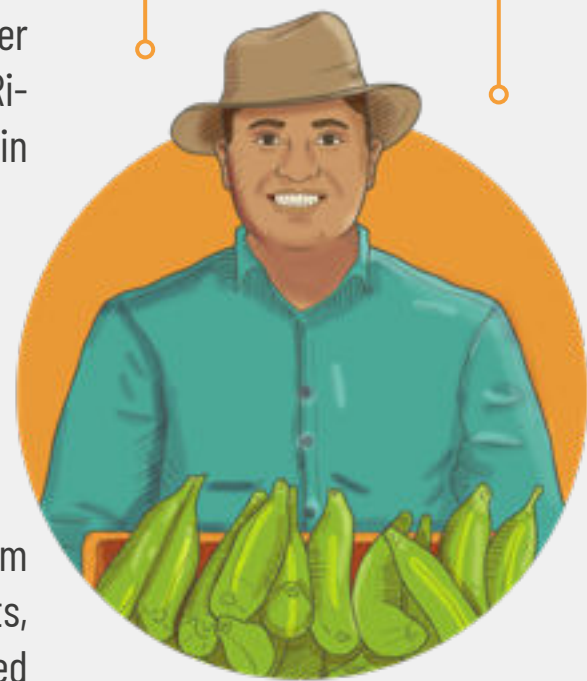
1 Food sovereignty



Food Sovereignty (hereinafter: FS) is a right recognized under the "Declaration on Peasants Rights and Other People Working in Rural Areas".



Then, FS became a platform of struggle and human rights, which, however, is still opposed by those responsible for hunger in the world.



FS is a historical achievement of the Peasant organizations (including fishing, nomadic, Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, among others) and human rights organizations.



It began as a concept opposed to the Food Security concept promoted by companies, corporations, institutions, and powerful countries that defend the current economic model of exploitation and destruction of the planet.

In short, FS means the right of every country, nation, people, community, or person to control and decide on their own food and food process. FS promotes access and consumption of food that has been produced in an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable manner. It puts people and future generations in the center of food policies and systems, instead of the interests of the market and industries. It also

seeks to give priority to local economies and markets, giving the power of food decisions and control over the common property to those who actually produce or obtain food, as well as to those who consume it. FS is also a commitment to the vindication of women's rights and the fight against any form of oppression and inequality between individuals, communities, peoples, and generations.



Idea, analysis, and texts by: Juan Carlos Morales González - FIAN Colombia. 2022.

Concepts taken from: FIAN Colombia. A country that sinks into hunger. Fourth report on the situation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition in Colombia/2021. Bogota. October 2021.



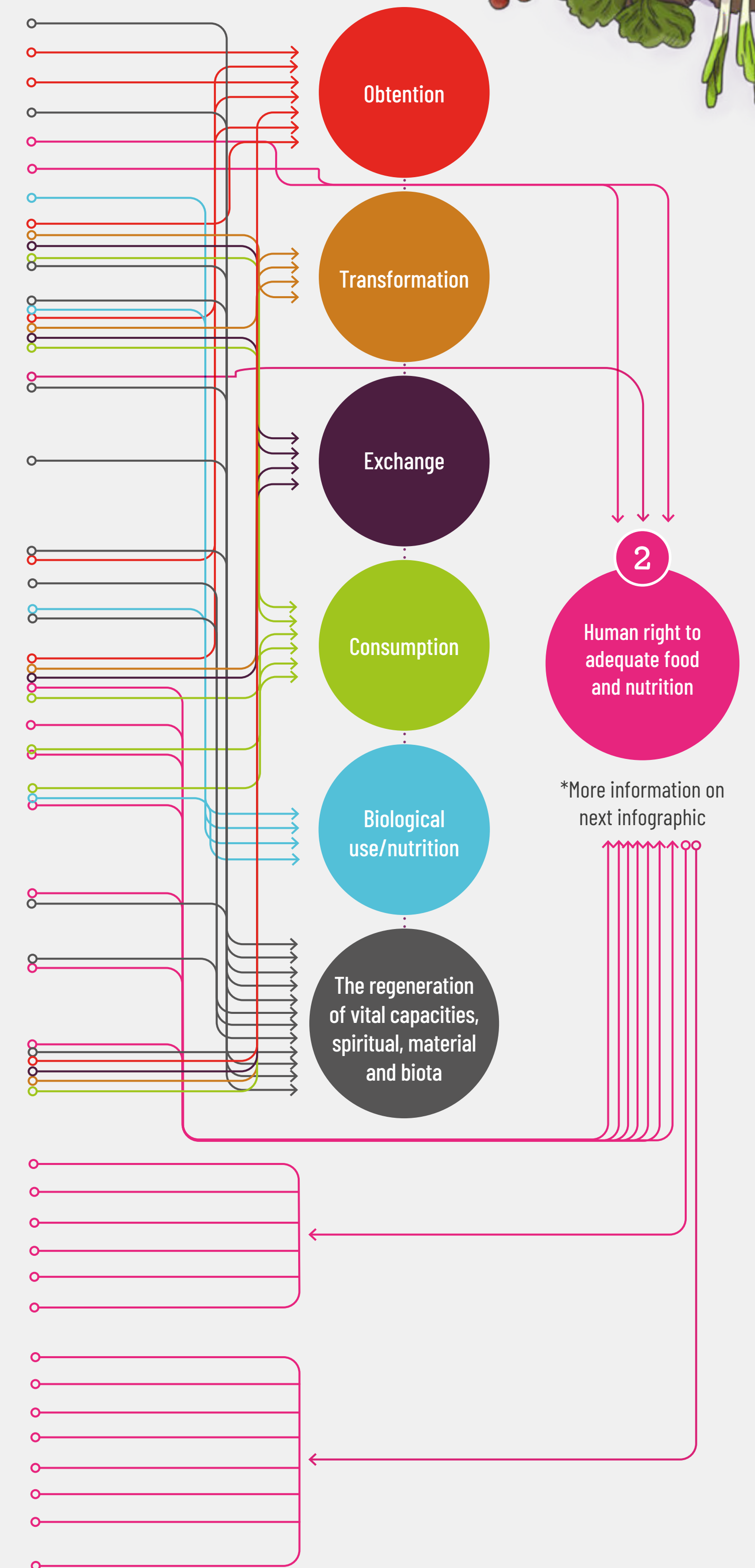
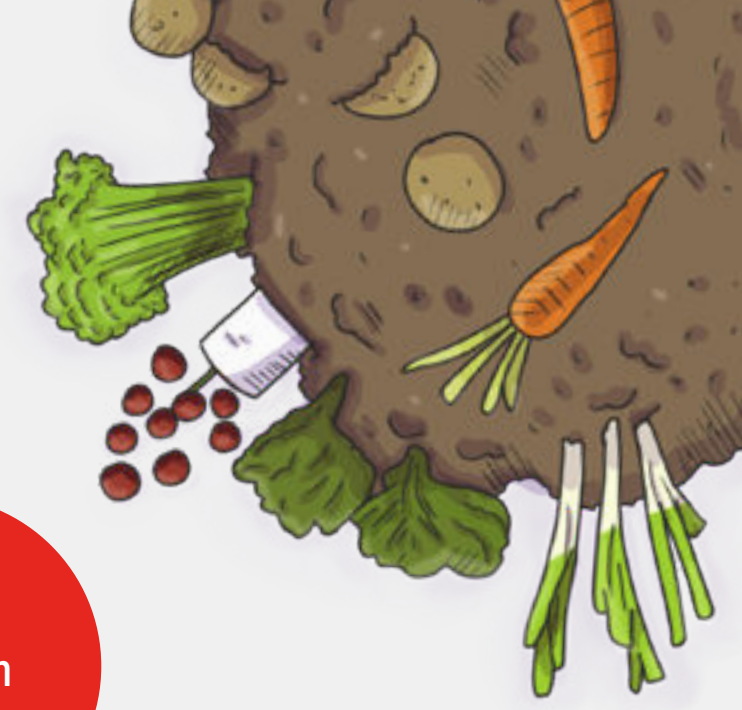
1. Concept summarized from: la Vía Campesina. Nyéléni Declaration. Selingué, Mali. 2007. Available at: <https://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article291>

2. Taken from: FIAN Colombia. A country sinking into hunger. Fourth report on the situation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition in Colombia/2021. Bogota. October 2021.

What is the core of FS?²

Next, it is shown what is the central core of FS and the things that it allows to achieve. In turn, through colored lines, it is evident how each of these elements or things are related to the different links of the food process and with HRAFN,

as well as the way in which both HRAFN and FS allow to fight against different forms of injustice.



2 Human right to adequate food and nutrition

According to international human rights and related instruments, the right to food is widely recognized in several international human rights instruments, and "it is exercised when every man, woman, or child, whether alone or in common with others, has physical and economic access, at all times, to adequate food or to the means to obtain it. The right to adequate food should not be interpreted narrowly or restrictively by assimilating it to a set of specific calories, proteins, and other nutrients."³

An analysis of these instruments makes it clear that the right to food is not just about ensuring adequate nutrition.

It is also about ensuring all the previous steps that people require to produce, exchange and access food, and make sovereign decisions around their food.

States have a number of obligations regarding the right to food. First, they should take measures to guarantee the right without any discrimination against people. In addition, they have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food, which is subdivided into realize-facilitate and realize-make effective.



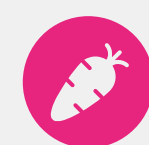
Respect: It means that States should not take measures or implement initiatives that jeopardize, limit, or prevent people from being able to guarantee their right to food on their own. Such situation takes place, for example, when States displace communities in situations of internal conflict, or launch extractive projects that affect people's food or their means of feeding.



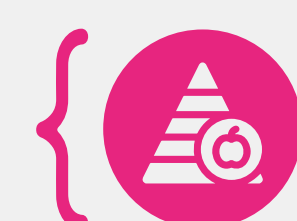
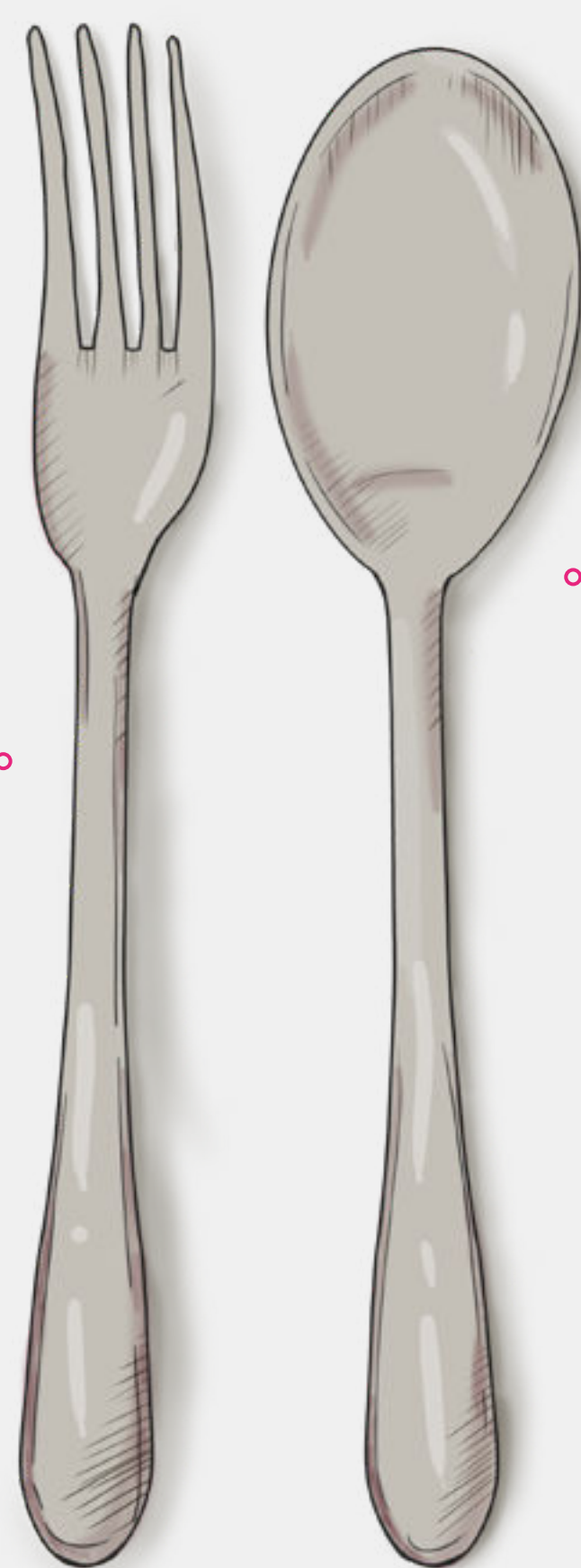
Protect: It means that States must protect people when their right to food is at risk or has been violated by third parties (other States, land dispossessors, drug traffickers, armed groups, investors, the food industry that promotes the consumption of UPFDPs, for example)



Realize-Facilitate: It means that the State must promote the conditions so that people who have seen their HRAFN affected can recover it. For example, through credits, restitution of destroyed property, technical support, among others.



Realize-make effective: When persons, individually or groups cannot guarantee their HRAFN on their own, States must deliver food through policies, programs, assistance measures or food aid. However, this does not mean that States will only do that, since they must create the conditions for people to overcome food dependence, restoring their ways and livelihoods; it means that food assistance is just one of the many actions that States must do to guarantee the HRAFN of the population.



THE HRAFN ADDRESSES EACH AND EVERY LINK IN THE FOOD PROCESS. WHEN STATES FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS REGARDING THE HRAFN, THEY VIOLATE THAT RIGHT. BOTH THE HRAFN AND THE FS ARE LIBERTARIAN RIGHTS.

3 Food process

Food is much more than just putting something in your mouth. Hence the importance of addressing human feeding or "the food fact" as a result of a complex chain of facts or moments we call the "food process". This multidimensional process, far from being linear, is (...) spiral in its evolution, also understanding its linkage is not necessarily rigid since, in certain circumstances, a certain element can precede or succeed some other, and sometimes not even be present"⁴.

It has a spiral shape because when the food process is re-initiated, the determining conditions (which include environmental, material, human, practice and knowledge, political and economic components, among others.) from the links that comprise it, as well as the full process, **do not repeat themselves exactly as in previous times.**

The links of the food process are obtention, transformation, exchange, consumption, biological use/nutrition, and regeneration of the biota and vital capacities, not only human. In the case of the human being, these capacities include those related to a material, spiritual and cultural nature.

a. Obtention: These are "the means, dynamics and productive factors that allow the creation and material obtention of food"⁵. Hunting, fishing, picking, breeding, planting, and harvesting are some of those means. Note that "production", motivated only by economic reasons, is not the only way to obtain food. That is why it is better to speak of obtention as a general category, which includes production but also much more than that.

b. Transformation: Food is not only transformed in industries. In fact, **most transformation processes occur in communities, inside households and their kitchens.** Industries like to make believe that most foods are transformed by them and, by stating that, they tell two lies. First, as already mentioned, food is mostly transformed in communities and households. **Second, because what the industry sells us in the end is not food but UPFDPs, which is the technical word for junk food and drinks.** The transformation that occurs in communities and households is also adapted to the cultures, traditions, and environment around us.

c. Exchange: There are many ways to exchange food, the supplies needed to produce it, and other related goods. It's not just the market. Unfortunately, the economic model portrays the "market" as if it were a God ruling everything and before whom the human being must surrender their destiny. The truth is that there are many other ways to exchange food without necessarily being mediated by money or profit. **These are very important means of solidarity and culture: barter, food exchange in rites of passage (baptisms, celebration of the moment of "maturity" of men and women, marriages, funerals), among others.**

d. Consumption: It "is made possible through physical access (you consume the food you produce or exchange in non-commercial ways, or those that receive food in contexts of food aid and donations), or economic (you consume the food you acquire with money) to such common goods". Unfortunately, due to the advertising, the unscrupulous practices of industries and the lack of regulation of States, eating habits are changing rapidly, **and a corporate diet is being imposed, or in other words, the consumption of UPFDPs, which are harmful to human health and the planet and are not actual foods.**⁶

e. Biological use/nutrition: It refers to whether what we consume nourishes us or makes us sick. **If they are actual foods, in the necessary qualities and quantities, they will provide us an adequate nutrition,** which will make our body grow, develop, and stay healthy. If they are UPFDPs, the opposite will happen; they will make us sick and will not nourish us. **That food and nutrition will be better if it is culturally relevant and it is provided in adequate conditions of health and environmental well-being.** Inadequate nutrition/biological use will affect our abilities to regenerate the conditions required to re-start the food process.

f. The regeneration of vital capacities, spiritual, material and biota: is a fundamental link in the food process. **An adequate nutrition based on actual food allows us to reach our biological, physical, and cognitive potential,** which is necessary, among other things; therefore, through our work and creativity we can start the food process again or intervene in one of its links. In the food process, we are not the only main characters, and that is why the regeneration of vital capacities includes what we can do to preserve other forms of life and their biodiversity, many of them important for the survival of the planet and our food.



3. Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. General Comment No. 12. The right to adequate food. Geneva. 1999. Paragraph 6. Available at: <https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G99/420/15/PDF/G9942015.pdf?OpenElement>
 4. FIAN Colombia. A country sinking into hunger. Fourth report on the situation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition in Colombia/2021. Bogota. 2021. p. 15. Available at: <https://fiancolombia.org/wp-content/uploads/Cuarto-Informe-Alimentación-2021-Un-pa%C3%ADs-que-se-hunde-en-el-hambre.pdf> In Spanish, "food process" does not mean food processing. It refers to the set of complexities (material and immaterial) and links that are related to the "food fact" and food. It should be noted that unlike English with the word "food", in Spanish there are several words to designate different things related to food.
 5. Ibid. p: 17.
 6. Ibid. p: 19