

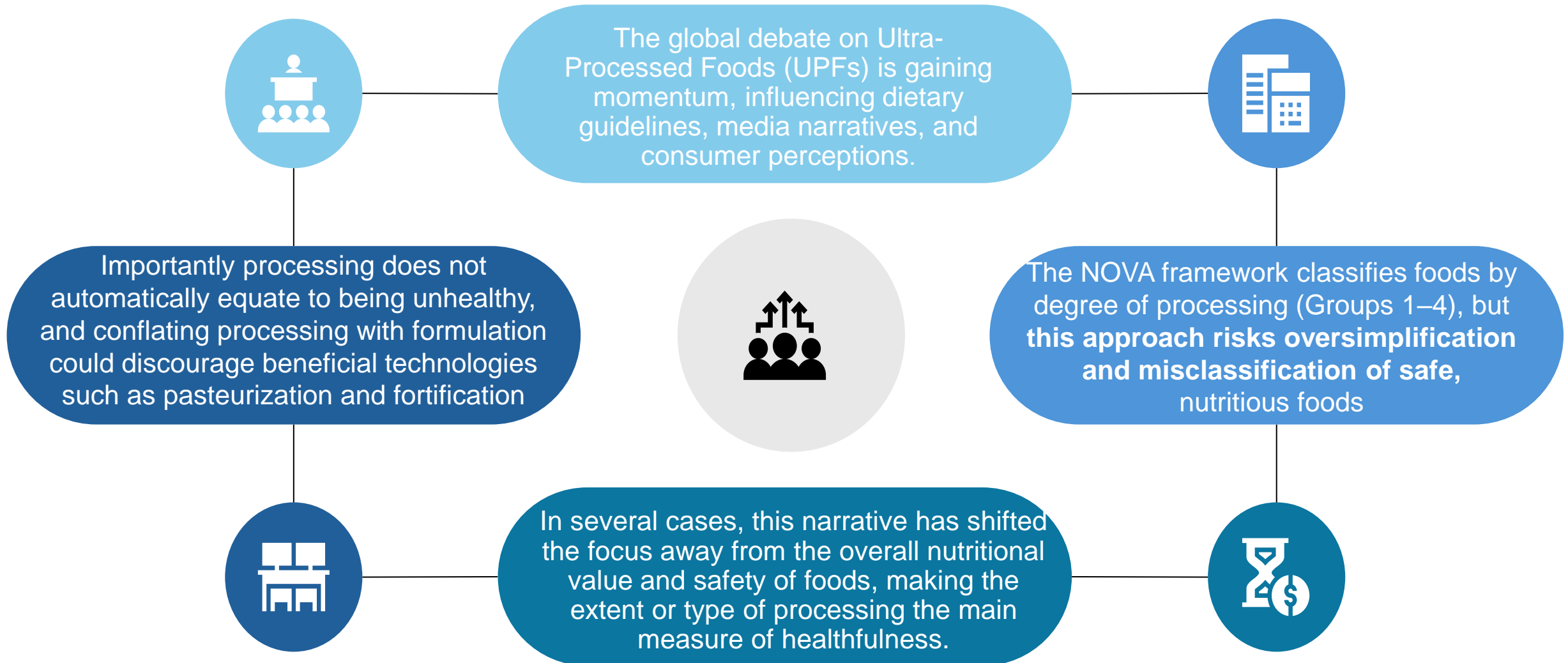
DISCUSSION PAPER

Evidence-Based Food Classification Underpinning Standard Setting and Policy Consideration – The Discourse about “Ultra-Processed” and the Possible Role of Codex

*Prepared by the International Union of
Food Science and Technology (IUFoST)*

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The Global Debate on Ultra-Processed Foods



Relevance to Codex

- the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU44) discussed the concept of ultra-processed foods (UPFs).
- The Committee noted **the lack of a globally agreed definition** and raised concerns about depending exclusively on the degree of processing as a basis for classification.
- Members emphasized that Codex already has tools such as **the Guidelines on Nutrient Profiling and Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling**, which offer more comprehensive and science-based approaches.
- For this reason, the Committee agreed not to initiate new work immediately but to continue monitoring developments in this area.
- The Committee also reviewed a proposal by Canada and the United States to develop guidelines on the nutritional composition of foods using protein from non-animal sources.
- While acknowledging the relevance of the proposal, the Committee decided to postpone further work until FAO publishes the results of its ongoing technical review.
- In addition, the Committee took note of WHO's planned expert consultation on UPFs, which will assess evidence on their links to diet quality and health outcomes, with the expectation that these results will inform Codex in future deliberations.



Regional implications (CCASIA)

- Many foods produced/exported could be classified as “**Ultra-Processed**” under the NOVA framework.
- This creates **potential risks for consumer perception, market access,** and trade competitiveness challenges if policies are shaped without considering regional contexts
- There is **Need for Evidence-based, multi-attribute classification** (nutrition, safety, sustainability) aligned with Codex principles.
- CCASIA may wish to **advocate for evidence-based, multi-attribute classification that reflects regional diets and supports fair trade.**



Overall Objective Pursued: Readiness to Address



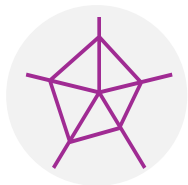
Examine food classification approaches – including those linked to “Ultra-Processed Foods” (UPFs).



Promote sound, evidence-based systems to support Codex standard setting and policy decisions on food and diet.



Anchor classification in Codex principles (e.g., nutrition labelling such as front-of-pack).



Integrate multiple measurable food attributes – nutrition, safety, affordability, sustainability, and palatability.



Highlight scientific perspectives (IUFoST 2024) on the limitations of the UPF concept as applied in systems like NOVA .



Consider alternative scientific methodologies for more reliable and comprehensive food classification.

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