



NEWSLETTER

On Occupational Safety and Health & Working Environment

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Viet Nam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health - VNNIOSH

THE LEADERSHIP OF VIET NAM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH VISITS THE ALL-RUSSIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF LABOUR



The leadership of Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health visits the All-Russia Research Institute of Labour

On December 6th 2019, within the agenda of the trip to Russian Federation, the leadership of Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) visited the All-Russia Research Institute of Labour. The meeting focused on the field of working condition assessment; occupational risk assessment and insurance mechanism for occupational accidents and diseases.

The representatives from VNNIOSH were Dr. Do Tran Hai, Director General and Correspondent. D.Sc. Pham Quoc Quan; from the All-Russia Research Institute of Labour were Deputy Director. Prof. D.Sc. Alexander Razumov; Prof. D.Sc. Valentin Roik – the leading expert of Russia in the field of social policy and insurance; Dr. Natalya Minhevich and Dr. Tachiana Mikhina – scientific staff from Research Centre for Labour Protection and Occupational Health.

At the meeting, the two organizations proposed and discussed on the possibility of reconnecting the cooperation relation in the field of labour protection and occupational safety and health. In the 90s of the 20th century, cooperation activities and research supports between scientific organizations of Russia and Vietnam had achieved many successes and developed in all fields of life. The establishment of VNNIOSH (formerly known as the National Institute of Labour Protection) in 1971 had acknowledged the valuable assistance of the Soviet colleagues.

The two sides exchanged information about research activities, requirements and

challenges in each country currently in the field of labour protection in particular and occupational safety and health in general. The leadership of VNNIOSH paid much attention on insurance for occupational accidents and diseases and also occupational disease in agriculture sector. Prof. D.Sc. Valentin Roik introduced scientific models and fundamentals of mechanism for insurance of occupational accidents and diseases, scientific staff also shared experience from Russian Federation on the organization of working condition assessment system, a uniform mechanism of occupational risk assessment and contribution levels of occupational accidents and disease insurance fund.

Dr. Do Tran Hai shared experience and introduced generally the ordering mechanism of the State in the field of OSH scientific research in Vietnam and the upcoming task of building a program on OSH risk management at state level which directly implemented by VNNIOSH under the management of Vietnam General Confederation of Labour.

At the end of the meeting, D.Sc. Alexander Razumov emphasized the importance of the establishment of cooperation relation between the two organizations, especially paying attention on the efficiency of mutually beneficial cooperation activities. Once again the leadership of VNNIOSH and the All-Russia Research Institute of Labour expressed the desire and affirmed the specific cooperation steps in the coming time.

Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health: Outstanding results after 3 years of the implementation of OSH Law

The Law on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) was passed by the XIII National Assembly and takes effect from July 1, 2016 with a lot of new content, including expanding the scope for non-working employees. The law also focuses on activities to prevent occupational accidents, occupational diseases, improve working conditions, establish safety culture in production, integrate OSH in environmental protection, etc. After 3 years of implementing the Law on OSH, VNNIOSH has achieved the following results:

From 2016-2018, the Institute contributed ideas for 138 OSH legal documents, technical regulations and standards; joining the Expert group of compilation of national OSH profile for the period of 2015-2017 presided by Department of Labor Safety, Ministry of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs; joined the Committee of drafting standards and regulations on ergonomics, directly contributed ideas on the development of 9 sets of TCVN standards on ergonomics.

VNNIOSH is a state science and technology organization under the VGCL. The Institute is assigned to conduct scientific researches in service of state management, operation of the VGCL on occupational safety and health, environmental protection. With the assigned politi-



Acceptance seminar of independent national-level project

cal task, in the period of 2016 - 2018, VNNIOSH has implemented 33 research and application projects of science and technology on OSH, including 1 independent national-level project. The theses has focused on researching scientific bases to promulgate labor grading policies and policies for people suffering from occupational accidents and occupational diseases; building a list of national standards and technical regulations on OSH; study and propose regulations and national standards on OSH, standards for assessment of work-related diseases with biological monitoring indicators, propose supplementation of work-related diseases; methods and techniques of risk assessment for compulsory industries in accordance with the Law

on labor safety and health; researching and assessing the effects of dangerous and harmful factors affecting occupational health, causing occupational accidents and occupational diseases; research on the impact of working conditions on the health of non-structural objects such as: offshore fishing workers, in rice production, in the use of agricultural equipment and machines; researching on many technological solutions to control labor environment pollution.

Information dissemination and propaganda on OSH laws and training on OSH have been strengthened, creating a significant change in the awareness of employers and employees on OSH. Over the past 3 years, the Institute has organized training for more than 68.000 groups of managers, trade union officials, workers and safety practitioners. The Institute also collaborates with a number of universities in training labor protection engineers, preventive medicine doctors, OSH workers in a number of disciplines; collaborates with the Bureau

for Safe Work (MOLISA) to organize training and testing of trainers training classes on OSH. Annually, the Institute coordinates with enterprises to organize medical examinations for 30.000 laborers, occupational diseases probing for 20.000 laborers. Based on the results of these examinations, the Institute has treated and proposed preventive measures for thousands of workers, recommended examinations for many cases contracting occupational diseases.

Occupational safety and health is a policy of preventing, limiting and overcoming risks. In order to effectively continue the law on occupational safety and health, contribute to improving conditions for minimizing occupational accidents and occupational diseases, VNNIOSH continues to actively advise VGCL in contributing ideas and critique for OSH policies aimed at union members and workers. At the same time, promote researching and apply science and technology in improving the working environment and conditions for laborers.

Vietnam joins Convention on Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining

In the morning of 14th June, the National Assembly voted on the Resolution ratifying Vietnam's participation in Convention No. 98 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on application of principles of the Right to Organize and Collective bargaining.

Convention 98 (1994) is one of the eight ILO core conventions under ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work, which covers: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the

effective abolition of child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. All ILO member states should respect and apply the principles under the 1998 Declaration.

Convention 98 has 16 articles, including three major components to ensure that collective bargaining between workers and employees can take place in an effective manner. They include: (i) protection of workers and trade union officers against employers' acts of discrimination at work, (ii) guarantees for workers' and employers' organizations to be



Collective bargaining builds the harmonious, stable and advanced labour relations

freedom to interference or dominance from each other and (iii) requirement of institution and legal measures provided by the State to promote collective bargaining.

Through the ratification of Convention 98, Vietnam has made an important step in political, legal and social-economic aspects, this is also appropriate to policies of the Party and State in international integration on labour and society, to confirm the determination and effort of the country in the duration of implementation of commitments related to labour in The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPPTPP) and to fulfill the responsibility of Vietnam as the member state of ILO, and to facilitate the participation to the FTA between the EU and Vietnam.

The ILO has sent congratulations to Vietnam on the ratification of Convention No. 98, one of the ILO's core conventions that aim to promote collective bargaining. "We congratulate Viet Nam on ratifying Convention 98. Not only is this a fundamental right, but also an enabling right that facilitates the achievement of many other labour protections", said the ILO's Deputy Director-General for Policy,

Deborah Greenfield.

The ILO Viet Nam Director, Mr. Chang-Hee Lee had his assessment about this importance event. According to Mr. Chang-Hee Lee, workers, trade unions and employers in Vietnam have already proven their will and capacity for genuine collective bargaining.

"The ratification of Convention 98 will accelerate the spread of genuine collective bargaining for win-win solutions at Vietnamese workplaces, which is likely to result in better working conditions, higher productivity and shared prosperity, contributing to sustainable development," he added.

Convention 98 is the sixth fundamental conventions Vietnam has ratified. They also include Convention 29 on forced labour, Conventions 100 and 111 on non-discrimination, and Conventions 138 and 182 on child labour.

For the remaining two conventions, Vietnam will also work on the preparation to ratify Convention 105 on forced labour by 2020 and Convention 87 on freedom of association by 2023.

The Vietnam Confederation of Labour and the Ministry of Health: Collaborate to protect, take care and improve health of workers and employees



President of VGCL, Mr. Bui Van Cuong and Minister of MOH to exchange the signed regulations of collaboration

Recently, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour and the Ministry of Health have signed the regulations of collaboration for implementing activities to protect, take care and improve health of workers and employees.

The content of collaboration comprises 03 chapters, 09 articles. Accordingly, the two sides will complete mechanism, policy and law on protection, taking care and improvement of the health of workers and employees. In which proposing to timely complement and amend policies on social insurance, medical insurance and toxic regime, list of occupational diseases for workers of specific occupations in health sector. To research and propose to

complement the list of arduous, hazardous and dangerous occupations and extremely arduous, hazardous and dangerous occupations into the occupations and sectors under the management of Ministry of Labour – Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), also complement other mechanism and policies related to health taking care in line with occupations and sectors. To research and establish trade unions institution (public service house at district) for medical workers who working at rural and remote areas to attract more human resource with high qualification to work at grassroots lines. To collaborate to research on providing evidences for establishing regime, policy, legal documents, professional statute,

technical norms and regulations on labour hygiene and occupational disease prevention: (i) to research on establishing a set of index for business assessment and classification to implement labour hygiene management at business; (ii) to establish, adjust and complement technical regulations in working environment monitoring, occupational health and diseases and new generated issues, (iii) to establish guidance for surveillance, management and improvement of some occupations using a large number of laborers and having high risk of occupational diseases (electronic production and assembly, leather and footwear, textile and garment, informal sector, etc.); (iv) to collaborate to research on occupational health for specific subjects such as female workers, workers from group of heavy, toxic and dangerous jobs; (v) to research on knowledge, behavior and attitude for HIV/AIDS prevention and the real situation for implementation and compliance regulations on HIV/AIDS prevention for workers at work.

The two sides collaborate to organize health taking care activities for workers and employees; to build a strong working class, trade unions and medical sector, in which organizing campaigns of environmental surveillance and sanitation, infectious epidemic prevention at businesses, construction sites, plants and factories, especially at guest house areas and worker's housing areas. To organize events which include health checking and free HIV consulting, testing and screening and also implementing preventive activities for the youth and high risk workers who working at factories and industrial parks. To carry out programs on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV for female workers. To carry out consulta-



Overview of the signing ceremony

tion and provide reproductive health services for workers and employees, especially workers in industrial parks and processing zones. To establish a tobacco smoke-free working environment. To integrate consultation and checking for non-communicable diseases, occupational diseases and workers' health management into periodical health checking at organizations. To collaborate to implement workers' health management, ensure to provide long-term and continuously health taking care for workers by medical division at organizations.

About the propaganda contents, two sides enhance the propaganda of legal documents and documents related to labor policies and laws, healthcare sector such as Labour Code, Trade Unions Law, Laws on Health Insurance, Health Check-up and Treatment, Food Safety Law, Law on HIV/AIDS prevention and control, OSH Law, etc.; to raise up the awareness on working environment hygiene, OSH measures, to prevent risk and harmful factors, to effectively apply model of occupational accident and disease prevention at organizations; to set up and provide communication documents for raising up the awareness, attitude and behavior on healthcare appropriate to workers and employees.

Workload and nutritional needs for workers in textile and garment, leather and footwear sectors in Vietnam

Food at work is considered as an important issue which needs to be paid attention strictly in ILO's Decent Work Agent. It is not only about the nutrition and food safety merely, it also impacts other conditions such as wage and income; working time and breaks (too short breaks for meals between shifts, shift work, etc.), infrastructure at workplace and worker's health (may be affected by the quality of meals, chemicals at work place and other hazardous factors, etc.).

ILO's research reports showed that meals for worker pay an important role, firstly for their own health then for the businesses and countries.

Worldwide, big businesses have continuously tried to get some progresses for low cost meals for example negotiating with food providers for safer and better foods or providing better dining room to make workers feel more comfortable. Meanwhile, small businesses may have many options with lower spending, depending on their own capacities and conditions. By any means, a meal with safe, clean and nourishing foods and at reasonable price is always in the first place. Beside the consideration of quality and portion, generally in some countries the suitable time for worker's meals has been paid much attention.

In Vietnam, the nutrition and food safety assessment for shift meals is not a simple issue because of the diversity of shift meals, regional characteristics, supply capacity of business (depend on the financial ability). Besides, research activity requires multidisciplinary participation of medical, nutrition and toxic environment experts and managers, etc.

For the target of "protecting health and life of workers, protecting and developing human

resources", the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) has implemented a state level independent research project: "Assessing workload, nutritional needs, portion and establishing a set of criteria for nutrition and food safety of shift meals for workers in some sectors". The project has been implemented in order to assess workload, nutritional needs and issues related to nutrition and to establish a set of criteria for nutrition for workers who are working at 48 textile and garment, leather and footwear companies.

Methods applied to assess workload and nutritional health include calculating working time and analyzing working characteristics; assessing lunch by qualitative methods (interview) and quantitative methods; checking health and performing some laboratory tests.

Research results of workload, health, nutritional needs and nutritional quality of meals in textile and garment, leather and footwear sectors show that:

- Working environment has many harmful factors such as heat, lighting, dust, noise, toxic gases (especially in textile and dyeing facilities). Besides, monotonous nature of work, repeated motions, restrictive postures (prolonged and frequent sitting or standing) that affect workers' health and psychophysiology, then make them suffered from occupational and work-related diseases.

- The burden of physical strength in both sectors of textile and garment, leather and footwear are at levels of heavy and very heavy respectively. The burden of stress is at levels of high to very high. Heavy works consuming lots of calories and mainly from groups of cotton arrangement, yarn machine operation, joining

yarn, cleaning pipe thread (at textile facilities); cutting, ironing, finishing, etc. (at garment facilities); cutting-chopping shoe models, soles cutting and pressing, sewing details, etc. (at leather and footwear facilities). Those are all heavy works that need to have good physical conditions and related to hazardous factors such as heat, lighting, dust, noise, toxic gases, etc.

- The energy consumption of worker changes according to labor intensity, work hours, the mechanization and automation of production process. Proper nutrition for workers requires: (i) satisfying energy needs according to each kind of labor; (ii) sufficiently satisfying nutrition needs and (iii) applying healthy dietary. Research results have shown that the energy consumption in both sectors is at average levels, accordingly 1087 ± 323 kcal/8h for textile and garment sector and 990 ± 320 kcal/8h for leather and footwear sector, and appear the difference in statistics ($p < 0.05$) between the two sectors and among working groups in each sector.

- Assessing results of actual shift meals for workers at the two sectors have not yet met the minimum nutritional needs, the nutrition components have not yet corresponding especially for vitamins and micronutrients. The average portion for worker (677 ± 218 kcal) in both sectors has not yet satisfied the actual energy needs for shift meals of worker (about 875 ± 172 kcal).

- The percentage of workers suffering from diseases related to nutrition is quite high: chronic energy deficiency (19.5%); blood deficiency (17.3%), low serum ferritin index (15.7%) in which 34.4% of storage iron exhaustion; low blood protein (9.3%); high blood sugar level (7.9%); metabolic disease (29.1% of low blood cholesterol and 20.3% of high blood cholesterol) showed the relation to nutritional imbalance.



Shift meals for workers have not yet satisfied the needs for the reproduction of labour force (Source: Internet)

- The quality of kitchen environment is limited: 68.7% violates sanitation standards for bacteriology; 77.8% of total number of fungi and 79.5% of aerobic bacteria exceed the allowable standards; 18.8% of shift meals providers affected by ambient pollution; only 19.6% of the kitchens have sufficient equipment for assessing the safe quality of products and the quality of foods; approximately 95% of facilities, employers and employees working in those kitchens provided training and health checking (with certifications); the numbers of food processing facilities ensure the principle of one direction in both sectors acquired 55.6%.

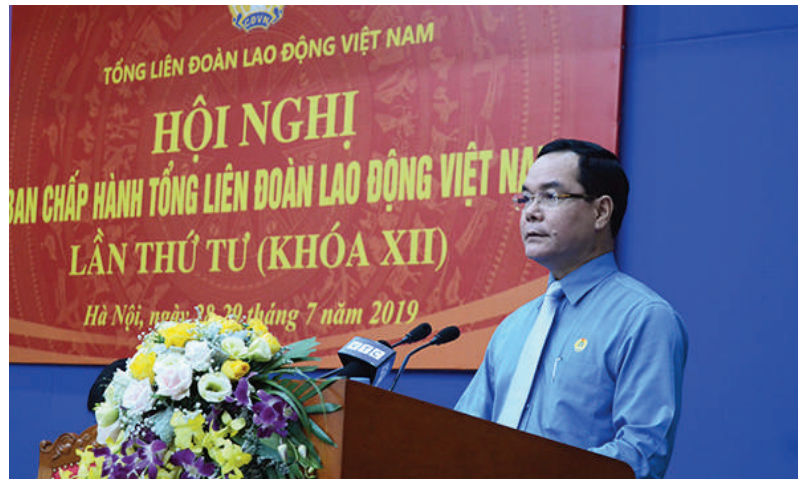
Basing on the survey results, 36 menus and testing assessments have been established by VNNIOSH. The testing results shows the menus are feasible, easy to apply and satisfy minimum energy requirement, the average weight of workers increased (about 0.63kg); the percentage of workers have chronic energy deficiency reduces about 3% and of blood deficiency reduces about 10%. Besides, VNNIOSH has proposed some solutions to improve working conditions, set of criteria on nutritional health and set of criteria on food safety and hygiene in which the needs for energy recommendation of shift meals for workers of textile & garment, leather & footwear sectors also mentioned.

Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang was elected as Chairman of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor

In the afternoon of July 28th, at the 4th Conference, the Executive Committee of the XII Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL) introduced and elected 12 additional members to the Executive Committee, 02 members of Presidium as well as the position of Chairman of VGCL. Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang, Member of Party's Central Committee, Party Committee's Secretary of VGCL has received 100% of the votes to be elected as Member of the Executive Committee of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, and Member of the Presidium of the VGCL. 100% of delegates also agreed to elect Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang as President of VGCL for the term of 2018-2023 on behalf of Mr. Bui Van Cuong, who was appointed by the Politburo to hold the position of Secretary of DakLak Provincial Party Committee for the term 2015-2020.

Prior to that, on July 21st, as the Politburo announced the decision on cadre work, Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang, Member of Party's Central Committee, Secretary of Ha Nam Provincial Party Committee, left his position in the Executive Committee and Standing Committee, resigned as Secretary of the Ha Nam Provincial Party Committee in the term 2015-2020, to be mobilized and appointed as Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee and introduced to be elected as Chairman of VGCL for the term of 2018 - 2023.

Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang (52 years old), has a master's degree in economic management,



Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang, new President of Vietnam General Confederation of Labor

hails from Thuan Thanh (Bac Ninh). Before returning to the VGCL, Mr. Khang had held the following positions: General Director of Vietnam National Chemical Group, Deputy Secretary of Party Committee of Vietnam National Chemical Group; Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of Ha Giang, Secretary of the Party Committee of Ha Nam Province.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang stated that this is a great honor as well as a heavy responsibility in the situation where Vietnam Trade Union facing many trials. At the same time, he promised to complete the assigned mission, cooperating with Party and Union to perform the role of workers' representative; renewing the content and method of operations of the Vietnamese Trade Unions, strengthen grassroots trade unions, becoming the reliable support for workers; joining and contributing in heightening the role of Vietnam Trade Unions.

Vietnam General Confederation of Labour implements the work of occupational safety and health in the period of 2019 - 2023

With the goal of creating a strong development in awareness and action in the implementation of occupational safety and health at all levels in the Vietnam Trade Unions, the Presidium of the VGCL has just promulgated a plan on implementing trade unions tasks to improve working conditions and environment, reduce labor accidents and occupational diseases in the period of 2019 – 2023.

Strengthening the leadership of trade unions at all levels for OSH operations

One of the key tasks in the aforementioned plan is that trade unions at all levels will focus on implementing key tasks and solutions, in which emphasizing the mission of strengthening the leadership and direction of the Executive Committee, the Presidium, Standing Committee of Trade Unions at all levels for OSH operations. At the same time, focus on solutions to incorporate this task into the annual and term agenda, assigning specific tasks and clearly defining targets to reduce occupational accidents and diseases.

The plan proposes prioritizing the deployment of experienced cadres trained in OSH or specialized in technology, especially in the fields and enterprises at high risk of occupational accidents and diseases, areas having many businesses and industrial zones, and a



Trade unions at all levels care and take care of workers' rights

large number of workers.

There is also the task of improving the image and further enhancing the effectiveness of information and propaganda provision. In particular, focusing on visual propaganda which is specific and close to the actual work of workers is proposed, along with the introduction and replication of good models of OSH; guiding and disseminating operational models and experience to grassroots trade unions in order to enable laborers to self-detect OSH hazards and incidents at workplaces; proposing suitable solutions and proposals.

Promoting OSH researches and proposing the completion of OSH legal documents

The plan also emphasizes the research

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task team; proposes the completion of OSH legal documents, standards and technical regulations, guiding documents; especially the proposal to continue to improve the Law on OSH to overcome difficulties and problems in the current regulations; to supplement new regulations to adjust new arising problems in the work of OSH.

“To research and propose to the Government the supplement of the list of arduous, hazardous and dangerous occupations and extremely arduous and dangerous occupations; to study and propose to the Government the supplement of the list of occupational diseases enjoying social insurance”. The plan outlines and sets out the task force on revision and issuance of guidelines and instructions for trade unions at all levels in implementing OSH, participating in improving working conditions and environment, reducing occupational accidents and diseases in a specific and realistic manner, especially with grassroots trade unions.

The VGCL presides over and coordinates with the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health to organize training and enhancing capacity for trade union officials working in OSH field at provincial level, trade unions of central industries, trade union of corporation under VGCL, trade unions of industrial zones, export processing zones, economic zones, district trade unions having a large number of enterprises and workers, trade unions of corporations in areas with high risk of occupational accidents and diseases. Also, to study, guide and disseminate within the trade union system about organizational models and experiences for employees to self-detect OSH hazards and incidents at workplace, and make recommendations, propose solutions to ensure occupational safety and sanitation.

In particular, the Plan determines that participation in improving working conditions and environment, minimizing occupational accidents and diseases needs to be implemented extensively at 4 levels of trade unions.

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