



# NEWSLETTER

On Occupational Safety and Health & Working Environment

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Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health - VNNIOSH



## NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

SCIENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH:  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Hanoi, Vietnam, 15-17 October 2021  
Online and Hybrid Form



## NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE "SCIENCE OF OSH: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"



*Participants of the National Scientific Conference "Science of Occupational Safety and Health: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development"*

In two days of November 16-17, 2021, the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) organized the National Scientific Conference "Science of Occupational Safety and Health: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development" on the occasion of the 50th anniversary (1971-2021). Attending the webinar were Mr. Park Doo Yong, President of the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), representatives of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

The conference is a forum for scientists and managers to exchange new issues arising in the field of OSH science and technology as well as environmental protection in Vietnam nowadays. At the same time, establishing a development direction in the period of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is bringing many opportunities and challenges to the country.

There were 24 scientific reports presented in opening and technical sessions, under the following topics: Quality of environmental sanitation and working conditions – Current status and solutions; Occupational health; Safety and policy.

In the opening session, delegates focused on the integration of OSH and COVID-19 prevention and control. Among them were the

presentations "Building a safe society in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic", "Protecting workers' health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and some proposals", "ILO Management systems approach to Occupational Safety and Health", "FES, Socio-ecological transformation and Green growth", etc.

Speaking at the conference, Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho, Acting Director General of VNNIOSH said: "Digital transformation technology has both changed working conditions and changed the nature of risks for employees. In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of ensuring safety and health for employees is not only focused on preventing risks caused by internal production, but also must be combined with risks. Therefore, the Institute is urgently conducting a science and technology project to control occupational safety and health risks in the context of safe, flexible adaptation and COVID-19 control. Deploying the development of a technology platform to provide medical services through the "Telemedicine clinic" allows employees infected with SARS-CoV-2 to access medical counselling, treatment and support, as well as review the system of policies and laws on OSH to serve the plan of amending and supplementing the Law on OSH and the Law on Social Insurance in the coming time".

## **BUILDING SAFE SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho**

Acting Director General of Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

*Taking care of and ensuring the safety, health and lives for employees is one of the major policies that are always highly regarded and valued by the Party and State. According to the National development strategy to 2030, Vietnam is a developing country with modern industry and high-middle income; the vision to 2045 is to be a developed and industrialized country with high-income; possessing modern, competitive, effective and efficient management institutions; as well as dynamic, fast and sustainable economic development. Such requirement sets out urgent tasks on OSH work and science on OSH in our country, for the sake of sustainable development and building a safe society.*

### **The Fourth Revolution and the issue of OSH**

Since 2011, the 4th Industrial Revolution has taken place rapidly with the characteristic of robot controlling systems. This revolution is based on the digital revolution and combines many technologies leading to unprecedented changes in economic, business, social and personal models. It not only changes the purpose of work and the way it is done, but also changes who we are.

Characterized by the fusion of technologies, this revolution thereby blurs the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological domains, bringing together virtual and physical systems. This is the digital revolution, using artificial intelligence to control and connect machines. Along with the development of industrial revolutions, it is the application of various forms of energy and electricity through machines and equipment, control and automation, and now the connection of all machines and equipment in order to liberate human labor and optimize resources. But in reality, production activities, working conditions and equipment used for manufacture still have

potential risks that can cause occupational accidents and occupational diseases, even disasters for humans.

Robotics - Mechatronics will be considered as one of the pillars of Industry 4.0 with smart factories and businesses undergoing comprehensive digital transformation, as well as many applications in different areas of life. However, we have not yet conducted research to assess the impact and understand the hazards and risks in work and life.

### **Globalization, international integration with OSH in Vietnam**

In the process of globalization and international integration, countries and enterprises must strictly comply with labor standards, including OSH standards of the International Labor Organization and the International Organization for Standardization in new-generation trade agreements. Some countries use OSH standards as a technical barrier for Vietnamese goods. In the context of 4th Industrial Revolution, the level of competition in the economy is increasingly fierce. All of that leads to the possibility of



*Survey on safe adaptive production model, pandemic control  
at My Duc Garment and Embroidery Joint Stock Company*

increasing the risk of trade inequality because OSH work in Vietnam is facing many challenges and difficulties. The strong development of small and medium enterprises with backward technology level; the import and use of new machines, technologies and materials apart from the positive aspects, as well as potential risks on OSH; the strong development trend of the mining, construction, energy, chemical industries and the increase in electricity use in industrialization and modernization will increase the risk of unsafety, sanitation and pollution of the working environment; the development of craft villages and household economic sectors in the market mechanism without control on OSH will continue to increase the pollution of the working environment; the labor force has increased rapidly along with the shift of a large number of laborers from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector with low skills and without industrial discipline.

The current corporate management mechanism is undergoing a very diversified

and unstable transformation, especially in the process of equitization and privatization; agricultural production implements agricultural industrialization and modernization is increasingly using machinery, equipment, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and chemicals. The international economic integration also sets requirements on the social responsibility of enterprises in ensuring OSH, necessary standards and technical regulations on OSH that need to be developed to ensure harmony and be capable to protect workers and domestic production.

There are urgent issues of occupational safety and health and caring for workers' health which need to be resolved: preventing the increase of occupational accidents, especially serious accidents that kill many people in the fields of construction, mining, chemicals and petrochemicals, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; strengthening the supervision of working environment pollution, gradually improving working conditions, taking care of and

improving the health of employees, building the OSH culture, improving social responsibility of enterprises, especially those operating in the field of export; raising awareness of employers and employees, focusing on craft villages, agricultural areas, in small and medium-sized enterprises about ensuring occupational safety and health, associated with awareness of environmental protection, public health, works and sustainable development.

In fact, the manufacturing industries always carry potential risks of causing occupational accidents, occupational diseases and environmental pollution. From an economic perspective, it is a direct and indirect cause of reducing labor productivity and profits of enterprises. Therefore, along with constantly improving the productivity, quality and efficiency of production and business of enterprises, it is always necessary to value the importance to OSH work, in order to be able to control hazards, risks and limitations, minimize occupational accidents and occupational diseases that may occur in manufacturing. Reality in developed countries shows that the development of an appropriate system of policies and laws on OSH; applying management system standards, in which special attention is paid to the system of prevention and reduction of the risk of OSH loss, improving the efficiency of OSH management will not only ensures the rights, health and lives of employees but also improve labor productivity, product quality, position and competitiveness of enterprises. Therefore, the issue of organizing and managing working conditions in tandem with machines and equipment serving in manufacturing (especially in the fields of heavy industry) should be considered in the promulgation of appropriate management policies. Risk assessment and management is an important requirement in building an OSH management system in order to constrain and control incidents and accidents at the workplace.

### **Building a safe society and a safe industry**

With synchronous solutions, especially continuing to well implement social security policies, especially for the vulnerable, the poor, and employees; it is necessary to complete the legal system on social insurance, towards the implementation of social insurance for all people. Develop a flexible, diversified, multi-tiered, modern social insurance system with international integration. After 35 years of renovation, 8 years of implementing Directive No. 29-CT/TU of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee and 5 years of implementing the Law on OSH, up to now, with the efforts of all levels, sectors and the whole community the business community, the working people, the legal system on OSH has been relatively completed; working conditions and workers' health have been gradually improved, the frequency of occupational accidents has been reduced in areas with labor relations, especially serious occupational accidents are excluded in some high-risk industries, etc. During the integration process, we can accept the positive aspects brought about by 4th Industrial Revolution, but the potential damage to human health and the environment caused by integration and development should not be ignored. Therefore, along with constantly improving productivity, quality and efficiency of production and business, it is always necessary to attach importance to OSH work, in order to be able to control risks and minimize them as much as possible. Occupational accidents and diseases may occur in the production process, contributing to the sustainable development of enterprises and the economy-society. In particular, economic recovery activities in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic are an opportunity for OSH, workers' health care and environmental protection to be promoted, invested and implemented practically. Along with that, safety products and services are increasingly essential needs of each business and community, this is also an opportunity for the industry of health care and safety to thrive.

## The Ceremony to Award Decision on the Appointment of new Acting Director General and Deputy Director General of VNNIOSH

### The appointment of Acting Director General of VNNIOSH

On September 1, 2021 morning, Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang handed Decision No. 3152/QĐ-TLĐ of VGCL Presidium to receive, appoint Deputy Director General and assign acting Director General of VNNIOSH to Mr. Nguyen Anh Tho, Deputy Director of Department of Work Safety, Ministry of Labour-Invalids and Social Affairs. The term for the appointment of Deputy Director General is 5 years, from September 1, 2021; the term for the assignment of acting Director General is from September 1, 2021 until the title of VNNIOSH Director General is completed.



*Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho,  
Acting Director General  
of VNNIOSH*

Addressing his acceptance of the task, Mr. Nguyen Anh Tho thanked the trust of the President of VGCL and the comrades in the Presidium. He promised to promote the solidarity and 50-year tradition of VNNIOSH and together with the leaders and staff of the Institute build a united scientific organization, creative and effective in order to contribute to the process of researching, formulating policies and applying scientific and technological solutions for socio-economic development in general and building a solid Vietnamese trade union and a modern and strong Vietnamese working class to meet the requirements of the new situation.

### The appointment of Deputy Director General of VNNIOSH

Previously, on July 14, 2021, Vice President of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) Tran Van Thuat awarded Decision No. 2844/QĐ-TLĐ on the appointment Dr. Vu Xuan Trung, Director of Occupational Health Center, VNNIOSH as the Deputy Director General of VNNIOSH from July 15, 2021. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Vu Xuan Trung sent sincere thanks to the leadership of VGCL and VNNIOSH staff for trusting him; affirmed to make his best effort to fulfill all the assigned tasks and expressed his wish in the coming time continue to receive the trust and support of the leadership of VGCL, the cooperation, sharing and companionship of generations of leaders and staff of the Institute to make the Institute more and more developed.



*Dr. Vu Xuan Trung,  
Deputy Director General  
of VNNIOSH*

### Decision on resignation from management position and extension of working time

Also in the morning of September 1, 2021, the Presidium of VGCL announced decision on resignation of management position and extension working time when reaching the retirement age, according to Article 9, Decree 40 of the Government for Mr. Do Tran Hai, Director General of VNNIOSH; the extension of working time is no longer than 7 years from September 1, 2021.

## COOPERATION AGREEMENT to improve the quality of health care for employees

### Signing ceremony of cooperation agreement with Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine

On November 16, 2021, the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) held a cooperation agreement signing ceremony with Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine. The signing ceremony was held online on 2 locations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The contents of the cooperation agreement include: Cooperation in conducting scientific research in the field of occupational safety and health; Cooperate in implementing health programs related to specialized fields; Coordinate health consultations for employees and people in the context of COVID-19 adaptation, safety and control; Coordinating in implementing models and solutions for occupational safety and health, taking care of workers' health and protecting the environment; Training and communicating to raise health awareness for workers at production facilities, etc.

### Signing ceremony of cooperation agreement with National Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health

Also on November 16, 2021 in Hanoi, VNNIOSH and the NIOEH held a signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in implementing activities specialized in the field of OSH.

The content of the cooperation agreement includes: (1) Cooperation in training on environmental monitoring, occupational diseases, occupational health, occupational safety and hygiene and communication to raise health awareness for workers in the production facility. (2) Coordinating in implementing activities of monitoring the working environment



*Signing ceremony of cooperation between VNNIOSH and NIOEH*

and monitoring the surrounding environment. (3) Protecting, caring for and improving the health of workers: promoting enterprises, production facilities, and employers to implement regulations on medical examination for employees; developing a program to improve workplace health; consulting and taking care of employees' health in the context of adaptation, safety and control of the COVID-19 pandemic; deploying techniques to analyze the working environment, occupational diseases and assess the impact of the environment on workers' health. (4) Scientific research: cooperate in carrying out specialized scientific researches in the fields of occupational safety and hygiene, occupational diseases, occupational psychology, ergonomics, labor burden, and risk assessment of COVID-19 infection and propose models and solutions to prevent COVID-19 infection at production facilities, etc.

Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho, Acting Director General of VNNIOSH, stated that the signing of the cooperation agreement aimed at improving the professional capacity and service quality of the units to meet the needs of healthcare workers, people as well as training according to social needs.

## The visit of Acting Director General of VNNIOSH to CNIOSH

**Dr. Nhan Hong Quang**

*Director of CNIOSH*

*On November 22, 2021, Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho - Acting Director General of the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and Dr. Do Tran Hai - Former Director General of VNNIOSH visited and worked with officials and employees of the Sub-Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and Environmental Protection in Central Region of Vietnam (CNIOSH).*



*Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho, Acting Director General, checks the test equipment system of CNIOSH*

This is the first business trip of Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho after being appointed to the position Acting Director General of VNNIOSH. The business trip demonstrated the initiative, positivity and responsibility of the Institute's leaders with the development of the Central Sub-Institute. During this trip, Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho worked with the leaders of the Central Sub-Institute, listened to reports on the work situation, checked the facilities, test equipment and gave timely instructions in the working activities of the Sub-Institute, in order to adapt

well in the complicated situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Central region.

Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho proposed and exchanged solutions to carry out studies on building sets of indicators to manage safety and working environment for industrial zones, especially with specific characteristics of coastal industrial zones in the Central region, there will be positive and negative impacts on the marine economy. The Acting Director General also suggested solutions for digitization, application of information



technology and 4.0 technology in service provision and scientific research, support and development of occupational safety and health training for facilities.

The Acting Director General also paid closed attention and directed the Sub-Institute to actively exchange and cooperate with experts and scientists in the Central region and the Tay Nguyen region in research to come up with solutions to improve practical occupational safety and health for establishments and businesses in the Central region. At the same time, he also hoped that

the Sub-Institute will consider the proposal to build an inspection center to provide equipment safety inspection services in the Central region and the Tay Nguyen region.

Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho emphasized: "With the advantage of having large corporations located in the area such as Thaco Truong Hai, DRC, etc., the Sub-Institute needs to actively propagate to gain the support and joint efforts of these enterprises in researching and transferring science and technology, developing solutions for production safety and preventing health deterioration for workers".

## COMMENCING "TELEMEDICINE CLINIC"

**Dr. Trinh Hong Lan**

*Director of SNIOSH*

*On December 1, 2021, the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in collaboration with the Department of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs in Ninh Thuan Province implemented the model of "Telemedicine clinic" at the Thong Thuan Seafood Processing Company and Tien Thuan Garment Company in Ninh Thuan Province.*

In the context that the health system of Ho Chi Minh City has been seriously overloaded when the number of COVID-19 cases in the city increases rapidly every day, many F0 cases in the city are completely inaccessible to the Ho Chi Minh City health system. Hospitals at all levels, field hospitals, concentrated treatment areas, and local medical stations are overloaded and cannot accept more patients, the establishment of remote medical teams has made a very important contribution in helping patients with COVID-19 who are isolated and treated at home to overcome this dangerous disease. At the same time, it also plays an important part in helping to reduce the burden on the City's medical facilities, which are overloaded, helping to prevent serious illness or death.

In the current period, when the strict isolation and social distancing measures have been lifted and although the pandemic has been initially controlled in the areas of Ho Chi Minh City, Dong

Nai and Binh Duong, the pandemic still continues to break out in many other provinces and cities in the country. To meet the Government's requirements, both to ensure production development and economic development, and to protect workers' health, the establishment of "Telemedicine clinic/team" using technology platforms to provide remote examination and treatment, care and consultation for F0 employees who are isolated workers at enterprises or at home is very necessary and appropriate in the current context. To meet this task, the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in collaboration with Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, Trade Union University, Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health deployed the "Telemedicine clinic" with aims to provide psychological counseling, examination and treatment, and care for F0 cases isolated and treated at home (or isolated at businesses).



*PhD, MD. Trinh Hong Lan describes the model of Telemedicine Team at Thong Thuan Co.,Ltd.*

Thong Thuan Seafood Processing Company has over 1000 employees and Tien Thuan Company has over 1700 workers. These are two of the first companies to implement this activity. As of December 1st, 2021, the total number of F0 cases of Thong Thuan Company is over 50, Tien Thuan Garment Company has 195 F0 workers. Most of the company's F0 workers have been isolated and treated at home. As reported by the company's managers, many F0 cases of the company in the past few days have also faced difficulty in accessing local medical care services because the local medical facilities have also been overloaded due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the area.

## Representative of Vision Zero Fund visited VNNIOSH

On the morning of November 24, 2021, the representative of Vision Zero Fund (ILO) visited Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) and had a meeting with the Institute's leaders on the prospect of future cooperation between the two agencies.

Attending the meeting were Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho, Acting Director General of VNNIOSH; Dr. Nguyen Anh Tuan, Director of the Occupational Safety Center; and representative of Vision Zero Fund (ILO), Ms. Kristina Kurths.

At the meeting, both sides discussed the prospects for cooperation in improving working conditions and access to personal protective equipment of employees working in the coffee supply chain; protecting and taking care of the health of farmers working in coffee plantations; compiling OSH training materials, organizing training courses on safety, applying information technology in the field of OSH management to improve working conditions and take care of workers' health.

At the end of the meeting, both sides agreed on potential cooperation and expressed their wish to commence future cooperation activities in the field of occupational safety and health.



*The meeting between VNNIOSH leadership and Vision Zero Fund (ILO) representative*

## **Remote COVID treatment for F0 patients at home in Ho Chi Minh city and orientations for health care and risk management platforms of the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health**

**Dr. Nguyen Anh Tho**

*Acting Director General of Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health*

*From May to September 2021, in Ho Chi Minh City and 19 southern provinces of Vietnam, information about F0 cases increased rapidly in almost all areas of the city, field hospitals, internment camps are constantly springing up but are always overloaded and unable to receive patients. In particular, the rapidly increasing number of deaths due to COVID-19 has made people extremely confused and afraid.*

In order to help reduce overload at hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City, and at the same time help patients with COVID-19 who are isolated and treated at home to overcome this dangerous disease, the Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine has established a network of "Telemedicine teams" consisting of lecturers and students of the University and collaborators who are doctors of different specialties to participate in remote examination, consultation, health care and monitoring for isolated F0 cases treated at home in Ho Chi Minh City area. This is a very simple but effective telemedicine model and is very suitable for the current actual pandemic situation. With only a smartphone and Zalo software, it is possible to approach, provide medical advice, examination, diagnosis and treatment for patients with COVID-19 who are isolated and treated at home. Doctors of Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (VNNIOSH) have also volunteered to participate in a Telemedicine team since then.

At this time, many F0 patients, when getting sick, have infected most of their family members. Meanwhile, other COVID-19 infected patients could not contact any

medical facilities because all hospitals, field treatment centers, and 115 ambulance fleets were overloaded and could not accept more patients. Then, the doctors - Telemedicine teams - became their only lifeline.

The current time in December 2021, when the pandemic situation in Ho Chi Minh City and the whole of Vietnam have been basically controlled, when most people have been vaccinated against COVID-19, however, the number of COVID-19 cases is still high in many localities, doctors of VNNIOSH still continue to receive and treat dozens of F0 cases online every day through the network of "Telemedicine teams". However, the treatment has been much less intense than the period from August to September because most patients receive treatment online. Most of the F0 cases have very mild symptoms, with little risk of becoming severe as before.

Through COVID-19 Online medical examination and treatment activities for F0 cases at home over the past few months, VNNIOSH is promoting telehealth services in order to adapt safety, flexibility and control of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as progress to control most risks of OSH, fire and explosion and environment in labour and production.

# NEWSLETTER

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### CONTENTS

•	National Scientific Conference “Science of OSH: Challenges and opportunities for sustainable development”	2
•	Building safe society in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Covid-19 pandemic	3
•	The Ceremony to Award Decision on the Appointment of new Acting Director General and Deputy Director General of VNNIOSH	6
•	Cooperation Agreement to improve the quality of health care for employees	7
•	The visit of Acting Director General of VNNIOSH to CNIOSH	8
•	Commencing “Telemedicine clinic”	9
•	Representative of Vision Zero Fund visited VNNIOSH	10
•	Remote Covid treatment for F0 patients at home in Ho Chi Minh city and orientations for health care and risk management platforms of the Vietnam National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health	11

## Some pictures of National Scientific Conference



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