

## THE SUB-INSTITUTE OF LABOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM - 36 YEARS OF ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

*Ha Lien*

The Sub-Institute for Labour and Environmental Protection in Southern Vietnam (SILEPS) – originally called Sub-institute of Labour Protection in Ho Chi Minh city, with more than 36 years of activity, from the initial facilities and core staff, the Sub-Institute has gradually built operational program, implementing assigned tasks in accordance with social-economic development of the country, particularly the Southern region.

In professional activities, scientific research fields of the Sub-Institute include basic research, strategic research, policy for occupational safety and health (OSH), improving working conditions, minimizing and preventing occupational accidents and environmental protection (EP).

In applied works to help production facilities, the Sub-Institute has focused in research to apply results of scientific studies for OSH and EP; in consultancy on technology transfer of new technologies; in fabrication and installation of working safety equipment and environmental remediation; in environmental impact assessment, monitoring, analysis, appraisal, control of environment and environmental engineering factors; in propaganda, coaching and training on OSH and EP. These



*Photo: The Sub-Institute of Labour and Environment Protection in Southern Vietnam obtaining Certificate of Merit from the Prime Minister*

activities are mainly concentrated in provinces in the Southern region.

Over the 36 years of activity and development, the Sub-Institute has contributed many scientific projects and applications to help improving the environment and working conditions for workers in the Southern region such as by implementing nearly 120 scientific research projects on OSH at all levels; implementing production projects for testing OSH equipment; implementing international cooperation projects on OSH; performing environmental monitoring for industrial production areas in Southern region; helping production facilities in counseling, teaching, training on OSH.

In addition, the Sub-Institute has also coordinated with the Department of Science and Technology in Ho Chi Minh City to implement scientific and technical applications, experimental production and supply of labour protective products, scientific and technological services of high quality. The works to improve working conditions applied in production facilities are highly appreciated, consistent with the production model of facilities. This 36 year's journey has been a history with many difficulties, favorable and adequate responsibilities and love as an unit of trade union organization.

Doctor Nguyen Dac Hien, Director of SILEPS, said the support of upper management, along with the best endeavour of generation of leaders, efforts of officials and employees during the past made "brand" of SILEPS became close, trust-

worthy to the production facilities and workers in the Southern region.

Looking back on the past journey, with practical lessons and experiences, confronted with economic and social development, in order to enhance research capacity and build a enthusiastic scientific staff team and Sub-Institute's contributions should be recognized by society, the SILEPS's Leadership has launched a number of objectives to be implemented in the future as follows:

- + Step by step, to build new and maintain laboratories to meet national standards;

- + To foster and train human resources to respond to the new situation;

- + To develop research programs to complete the analysis and evaluation of safety and hygiene techniques in major industries;

- + To focus research on sectors potential of dangerous and hazardous levels (building, mechanical, electrical, chemical, agricultural processing, seafood, working on rivers, craft villages).

- + To research scientific basis to supplement and develop OSH standards and regulations for new industries and technologies;

- + For small manufacturing sector and rural production: To focus research on improvement of OSH and working conditions at the agricultural service sector (farming, care), the typical craft villages in the Southern region (ceramics, bricks, tiles, weaving, fine handicrafts, ... );

- + To research on developing management models for OSH activities in accordance with the region and territory management plan in aspects of the system approach.

- + To research on developing the OSH standard information system, statistics management on occupational accidents and diseases in order to produce reliable national data.

- + To research on improving contents and methods of communication and training, from basic training to skill training for preventing occupational accidents and diseases to different candidates in accordance with the law.

- + To consider proposing gradually the OSH criteria associated with socio-economic development criteria (developing new countryside, developing new production methods, etc) .

In recognition of the collective contribution of SILEPS' officials and employees in the performance of assigned duties, the Sub-Institute has been awarded the Third-Class Labour Medal and many flags, certificates of merit from the Prime Minister, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour and many awards for scientific and technological innovation activities of the agencies involved.

These results have encouraged SILEPS' staffs to strive further in the implementation of political tasks and professional works, contributing to improve environment and working conditions as well as contributing to the protection of life and health for workers.



# RESEARCH ON EQUIPMENT KITS OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION FOR WORKERS LIVING AND WORKING IN THE HIGH BUILDING

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With the rapid development of the economy, the population in large cities increased rapidly due to the concentration of economic hubs, industrial zones and demands enjoying benefits and utilities of workers. To address the surge in housing and offices, Vietnam and other places in the world have massively built high-rise residential and office buildings. The construction of high-rise buildings presents numerous benefits, except for one thing: safety in case of fire incidents. Although buildings have evacuation plans in accordance with the design but in reality these plans are insufficient. Even overseas, catastrophic events in recent years have shown the skyscrapers filled with death threats, the life-line exits in the buildings are not efficient and capable enough when disasters like fire, natural disasters or earthquakes happen.

For more options of exit for people living and working in high-rise buildings, some countries have conducted studies of individual evacuation kits. In Vietnam, the Occupational Safety Centre under the National Institute of Labour

Protection has conducted research on equipment kits of emergency evacuation for employees living and working in high-rise buildings in order to help them escape when fire and explosion incidents occur.

**Research equipment kits of emergency evacuation conducted by the National Institute of Labour Protection includes:**

- + Personal sliding device including slide-down device; sliding rope; connection ring; safety belt; auxiliary line.
- + Hammer: Used for breaking doors and latching.
- + Dust masks.
- + Protective eyeglasses.
- + Protective work gloves.
- + Document guidelines for escape.
- + In addition, employees could equip themselves with emergency masks and helmets.

**Personal sliding device:**

Personal sliding device is the main component of the escape support equipment kits, including:

- Sliding rope: synthetic fiber rope of 12mm diameter, polyester fiber core (PET), polyamide fiber sheath (PA).

- Hand brake: made from

SM400C Japanese steel by punching method.

- Abdominal belt: using abdominal rope of safety belt against falling from high.

- Connection ring: using high quality imported connection rings.

Details have been fabricated, assembled and quality controlled to meet the requirements of standard EN 341, related technical documents and requirements of actual use (Figure 1, Table 1).

**Assessment of personal sliding device quality:**

Standard EN 341: 2011 has been used as a basis for evaluating and assessed quality results of devices are as follows (Table 2).

**On-situ testing personal sliding device:**

Because the nature of this type of device is used only for emergency situations, therefore in order to confirm reliability, as well as to test the operability of the device for the purpose of completing more products, the researchers have directly tested the device on field and confirmed that personal sliding devices have worked fine.

Enclosed with the escape

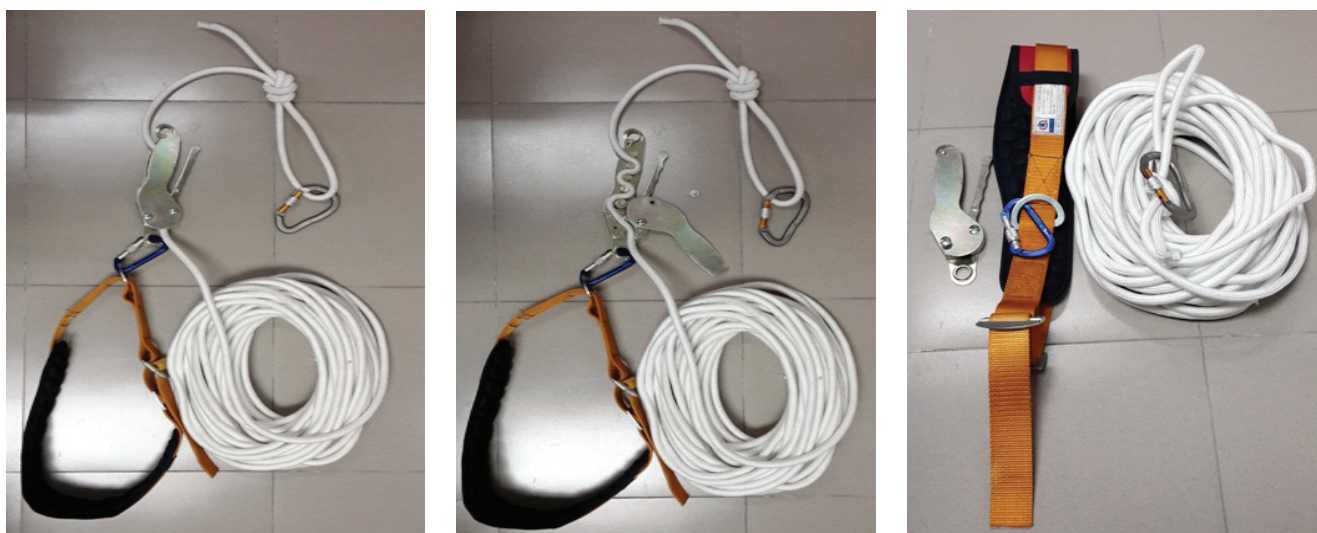


Figure 1: Personal sliding device

Table 1: Technical requirements of personal sliding device

No	Details/ Criteria	Materials, specifications	Technical requirements of EN 341 (Devices of D group)	Technical requirements for personal sliding device
1	Sliding rope	- Synthetic fiber - Diameter: 10 to 13mm	- Static Durability: 5 kN - Elongation: <8% when using	- Static Durability: 12 kN - Elongation: <8% when using
2	Hand clamp squeezing force		- Right hand squeezing force <120N with 80 kg testing object	- Right hand squeezing force <120N with 80 kg testing object
3	Sliding down speed		- Speed $\leq 2$ m/s	- Speed $\leq 2$ m/s
4	Sliding down energy	Testing object: 100 kg	- Number of attempts: 1 - Temperature $\leq 48^{\circ}\text{C}$	- Number of attempts: 34 - Temperature $\leq 48^{\circ}\text{C}$
5	Function	Testing object: 100 kg	- No damage causing unsafety	- No damage causing unsafety

support device kits is the booklet "Guidelines for a fire escape in high-rise buildings". This document consists of 2 parts:

+ Part 1: Manual for use and maintenance of escape support device kits

+ Part 2: A guidance for emergency exit in case of fire in high-rise buildings.

The device different from other foreign existing devices is that it could be used to drop

people down while foreign device is able to slide - down. The kit is compact: the total mass of kit is 8 kg (with 50 m of sliding rope) .

Sliding devices are made from Japanese high quality steel and are galvanized to ensure anticorrosion with long term storage under tropical conditions, hot and humid.

This product can be used for the jobs as painting or glass clean-

ing for high buildings. It could be used both as a sliding down device and safety equipment.

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*Figure 2: Details of one escape support device kit*



*Figure 3: Sliding down with personal sliding device*

**Table 2: Evaluation results for personal sliding device**

No	Details/ Criteria	Materials, specifications	Technical requirements for personal sliding device	Evaluation results	Conclu- sion
1	Sliding rope	- Synthetic fiber - Diameter: 10 to 13mm	- Static Durability: 12 kN - Elongation: <8% when using	Static Durability: >12 kN Elongation: <6% when using	Pass
2	Connection ring	Cast aluminum	No damage when trying to pull ( $\geq 15$ kN/3min)	No damage	Pass
3	Abdominal rope and lock		No damage when trying to pull ( $\geq 8$ kN/3min)	No damage	Pass
4	Ring D	Steel	No damage when trying to pull ( $\geq 12$ kN/3min)	No damage	Pass
5	Reliability of splice at end of sliding rope		No slip while testing ( $\geq$ 12 kN/3min)	Not slipped	Pass
6	Hand clamp squeezing force		Squeezing force $F_b$ <120N with 80 kg testing object	$F_b < 80$ N	
7	Sliding down speed		Speed $V_t \leq 2$ m/s	$V_t \leq 2$ m/s	
8	Sliding down energy	Testing object: 100 kg	- Number of attempts: 34 - Temperature $\leq 48^\circ\text{C}$	- Number of attempts: 1 - Temperature $\leq 48^\circ\text{C}$	
9	Function	Testing object: 100 kg	- No damage causing unsafety	- No damage causing unsafety	



tem of safety belts.

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## 16<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL WEEK ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY HEALTH- FIRE EXPLOSION PREVENTION 2014

**Tran Thi Dong**  
**National Institute of Labour Protection**

In the morning of March 16th, the National Steering Committee for National Week on Occupational Safety&Health and Fire&Explosion prevention and control (OSH-FEPC) had coordinated with the People's Committee of Thua Thien - Hue province to launch the 16th Week on OSH-FEPC, 2014 at Phu Bai industrial Park (Thua Thien – Hue province). This year, the topic of the Week is "Think and act toward the goal of zero occupational accidents

and diseases, fires and explosions at the workplace".

Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs Ministry, Ms Pham Thi Hai Chuyen said that in 2013, OSH-FEPC activities have been implemented broadly and deeply across the country and have achieved some results; However there were occurrences of 6,600 accidents cases, killing 627 people, seriously injuring 1,500 people, causing a loss of 72 billion VND and hundreds of thousands of working days-off.

The areas and sectors with more deadly work-accidents are construction, mining, power generating and trading, mechanical manufacturing. In the field of fire & explosion, in 2013, there were nearly 2,700 fire and explosion cases nationwide that killed over 100 people, injured nearly 200 people. Compared to 2012, the number of fire&explosion cases increased by more than 900 cases with a loss estimated of nearly 1,700 billion VND. The cause of the accidents stems



**Figure: Responding to the Launching ceremony of 16th National Week on OSH-FEPC, 2014**

mainly from employers who do not develop safe working procedures and methods nor provide sketchy personal protective equipment, etc.

In order to successfully implement OSH-FEPC in 2014, it is necessary that all government levels, industries, employers and employees focus on comprehensive implementation of important tasks and measures, among which to emphasize on education, training, advocacy, raising awareness about occupational safety; to take measures to prevent work-accidents; to strengthen inspection, control, resolutely dealt with strictly and timely, disclosure of information for businesses and individuals in violation on mass media; promote international cooperation in the field of OSH-FEPC, etc. This is considered a breakthrough to bring legal policy on OSH-FEPC to numerous classes of workers.

At the launching ceremony, Mr. Sziraczki Gyorgy, Director of the Office of International

Labour Organization (ILO) in Vietnam, said that in the world every 15 seconds a worker dies because of working accident or occupational disease and 160 persons injured by work-accidents. With the accession to the Convention 187, on a policy framework to promote occupational safety and health, Vietnam became the 3rd country in Southeast Asia to ratify the Convention 187 and is a typical example in the area on ensuring a safer workplace, and sends to the world a strong message that Vietnam's products are manufactured in safe conditions.

To continue to promote the results, Mr. Sziraczki Gyorgy suggested Vietnam should proceed next steps, such as improving statistic data because knowledge is the key of prevention; promoting "prevention culture" in society; strengthening activities to raise awareness in the community; improving national health monitoring system and working

inspection; strengthening improvement of policies and practice methods of occupational safety and health.

At the launching ceremony, the Organization Committee of 16th National Week on OSH-FEPC has awarded many provinces, organizations and individuals for their achievements in OSH-FEPC and awarded Challenge banner to Ba Ria-Vung Tau, the province that will host 17th National Week on OSH-FEPC.

During the program of 16th National Week on OSH-FEPC, 2014, President of Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, Mr. Dang Ngoc Tung has visited a number of families with work-related accident victims in Thua Thien – Hue province, visited the Center for Vocational Training and Employment for disabled people in Thua Thien – Hue where 150 disabled children in the area are following vocational education and training courses for free, etc.

# STATISTICS OF WORK- ACCIDENT SITUATION IN VIETNAM, 2013

In February 2014, the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs has informed to ministries, sectors and localities nationwide about the situation of work accidents in 2013 as follows:

## I. OVERVIEW

### 1. Number of work- accident cases

As reported by 63/63 provinces and cities directly under the Central Government, in 2013 throughout the country there were 6,695 work-accidents cases, resulting in 6,887 victims, including:

- The number of fatal accidents: 562 cases;
- Number of deaths: 627 persons;
- Number of work-accidents cases having 2 or more victims: 113 cases;
- Number of seriously injured people: 1,506 persons;
- Female victims: 2,308 persons.

### 2. Work-accidents situation in provinces

According to data reported in 2013, 10 provinces with the highest number of deadly accidents are Ho Chi Minh City, Quang Ninh, Hanoi, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Bac Giang, Nghe An and Da Nang. The number of deaths by fatal accidents of

these provinces accounts for 49% of total deaths by work-accidents at nationwide.

## II. ANALYSIS OF ACCIDENTS WORKERS

According to incomplete reports of 63 Department of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, in 2013, throughout the country there were 562 fatal accidents, but on December 31st, 2013, the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs has received only 175 investigation records (189 dead). Analysis from the investigation reports of fatal accidents is as follows:

### 1. Industries and business having more fatal accidents

- The construction sector accounted for 28.6% of the total

number of accidents and 26.5% of total deaths;

- Minerals mining sector accounted for 15.4% of total cases and 14.3% of total deaths;

- Power generation and trade accounted for 6.3% of total cases and 5.8% of total deaths;

- Mechanical engineering sector accounts for 5.1% of the total number of cases and 4.8% of total deaths.

### 2. Main injury factors causing the most deaths

- Falling from height accounted for 26.9% of total accident cases and 24.9% of total deaths;

- Electric shock accounts for 21.7% of total cases and 20.1% of total deaths;





- Laminating, clamping, rolling machinery accounted for 14.6% of total cases and 13.6% of total deaths;

- Falling and collapsed objects accounted for 14.3% of total cases and 13.2% of total deaths;

- Traffic accidents accounted for 11% of total cases and 10.1% of total deaths;

- Splashed materials accounted for 4% of total cases and 3.7% of total deaths.

### 3. Causes of work-accidents

\* *Causes by employers accounted for 59%, namely:*

- Unsafe equipment accounting for 22% of total cases;

- Employers not developing safe working procedures and measures accounted for 18% of total cases;

- Employers not providing work safety training for employees accounted for 10% of total cases;

- Due to working organizations accounted for 6% of the cases;

- Employers not providing personal protective equipments accounted for 3%.

\* *Causes by employees account for 26%, namely:*

- Employees violating working safety procedure and regulations accounted for 21% of total cases;

- Employees not using personal protective equipments accounted for 5% of total cases;

\* *The remaining 15% of the accidents occurred due to other causes.*



### 4. Losses by work-accidents

According to data reported by provinces, physical loss due to work-accidents occurred in 2013 (including drug costs, burial, compensation for the families of deaths and injured, etc) is 71.85 billion VND, assets loss is 6.27 billion VND. The total number of days off due to work-accidents is 153,658 days.

### CONCLUSION

In general, reported cases of work-accidents have been investigated conformed to regulations. However, the cooperation in solving fatal work-accidents has not been so effective, therefore investigating progress for fatal work-accidents is still slower than required. There are still many accidents occurring in mining of private businesses, building private houses that have not been surveyed, reckoned and reported.

Based on situation and causes of accidents occurring in 2013, in order to proactively prevent and limit accidents in

the future, the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs should propose to ministries and agencies to strengthen closely monitoring and inspecting occupational safety and health, particularly in areas highly potential of unsafe work; Ministry of Information and Communications should direct press agencies enhancing coordination of information dissemination on OSH to raise awareness of the employers and the employees; People's Committees of provinces and cities, businesses, production and trade establishments should enhance self-control on OSH, organize OSH training, develop safety working procedures and measures and plans for dealing with breakdowns and emergency responses; Employees should raise awareness of compliance with rules and regulations on OSH, to be vigilant in detecting accidents risks and promptly notify responsible persons to take timely remedial measures.

## MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKED WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LABOUR PROTECTION

In the afternoon of March 27th, 2014 the National Institute of Labour Protection has worked with the Department of Science and Technology for Economic Technical branches and Department of Planning and General Affairs under the Ministry of Science and Technology on Joint Program on implementation of Science and Technology plan in 2014 and development of plan for 2015 of the National Institute of Labour Protection.

Attending the meeting, participants of the National Institute of Labour Protection included Dr. Do Tran Hai - Director, Member of the Presidium of Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, Dr.Sc. Corresponding Academician Pham Quoc Quan - Deputy Director and chiefs of some divisions of the Institute; delegates of Ministry of Science and Technology included Mr. Nguyen Van Lieu – Director of Department of Science and Technology for Economic Technical branches, Ms. Cu Viet Ha - Deputy Director of Department of Planning and General Affairs and some others.



**Figure: Dr. Do Tran Hai, Director of the National Institute of Labour Protection giving a speech at the meeting**

At the discussion, Dr. Sc. Pham Quoc Quan has reported on implementation of Science and Technology plan in 2014 and development of plan for 2015 of the National Institute of Labour Protection including: Synthesis of implemented tasks of Joint Program; Review the situation of allocated funds to deploy the Science and Technology plan in 2014; Orientation for development of the Science and Technology plan in 2015; and expectations for collaboration works in the next year.

At the meeting, the Department of Science and Technology for Economic Technical branches and Department of Planning and General Affairs raised opinions about coordinating program to implement the Science and Technology plans 2014 - 2015 and orientation for the next phase until 2020.

At the end of the meeting, the two sides have reached an agreement on the main content of the coordinating program to implement science and technology plan in the near future.



## NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LABOUR PROTECTION WORKED WITH MISUZU COMPANY, JAPAN

In the afternoon of March 13th, 2014, leaders of the National Institute of Labour Protection (NILP) held a meeting and worked with leaders of Misuzu company, Japan.

Representatives of Misuzu company included Ms. Mikuchi Mihoko, General Director of Japanese Misuzu; Mr. Kotake Jun, Office Chairman; Mr. Ouchi Kenji, President of Japanese Misuzu; Mr. Nakajima Yoshiyuki, technical advisor and Ms. Tran My Linh, Director of Vietnam Misuzu. Representatives of NILP included Dr. Do Tran Hai, Director; MSc. Vu Thanh Luong, Deputy director of Working environment monitoring and analyzing station and some key staff of the Institute.

Misuzu company operates in the field of water analysis (drinking water, wastewater, natural lakes, dams, etc), working environment and industrial



**Figure: Representatives of Misuzu company visited laboratories of NILP.**

wastes monitoring and control, analysis of bacteria in food, genetic analysis, etc. The company headquarter is in Fukushima, Japan where the tsunami disaster happened in 2011. After learning a number of activities of NILP, the delegation of Misuzu company has visited several laboratories of NILP.

With the desire to promote and expand cooperation relations, promote and enhance the activity of radiation control, improvement of living environment in region, bilateral cooperation of mutual benefit, the two sides have discussed and hoped that a new direction of cooperation will take place in the future.

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## SHARING EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ASBESTOS PROFILE TO DELEGATION OF LAOS OFFICIALS

On January 13th, 2014, in the headquarter located at 99 Tran Quoc Toan Street, Hanoi, leaders of the National Institute of Labour Protection (NILP) had a meeting, worked and shared experiences in the formulation of National asbestos profile with a officials delegation of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos

Joining the meeting, representatives of NILP included Mr. Do Tran Hai, Director; Mr. Pham Quoc Quan, Deputy Director and some staff of NILP. Delegates of Laos included Mr. Kampon (Chief of Environmental Division, Lao Ministry of Industry and Trade), Mr. Bo Van



# NEWSLETTER

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(Lao Labour Confederation), Ms. Viensamay (Deputy chief of Chemical Division, Ministry of Health), Ms. Susamay (Expert of Industrial Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade) and Ms. Vilada (Representative of Laos APHE-DA).

At the meeting, representatives of the Lao delegation informed that in Laos there are no regulations on chemical management in general, asbestos management and usage in particular. They are in the process of building and collecting asbestos-related data. Through this working visit at NILP, Lao delegation desired to exchange and find out challenges and initial achievements gained in the formulation of Vietnam National asbestos profile and Vietnam's experiences during collecting information about asbestos. At the same time, Lao delegation expected to receive the help and support of NILP in the development of National asbestos profile in the near future.

At the end of the meeting, the leaders of NILP also expressed enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate and assist Laos colleagues.



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