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Vision Zero Fund

# **HIGH-LEVEL FORUM**

2021 and Beyond:  
Collective Action for Safe  
and Healthy Supply Chains

23-25 FEBRUARY 2021



# Vision Zero Fund **HIGH-LEVEL FORUM**

## 2021 and Beyond: Collective Action for Safe and Healthy Supply Chains

**23-25 FEBRUARY 2021**

This report summarizes the main findings and outcomes from the Vision Zero Fund High Level Forum — ***'2021 and Beyond: Collective Action for Safe and Healthy Supply Chains.'*** The Forum was convened from 23-25 February 2021 to facilitate discussions and promote collective action in support of the Vision Zero Fund's goal of achieving zero severe fatal work-related accidents, injuries and diseases in global supply chains. Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum highlighted the urgent need to improve occupational safety and health (OSH) in global supply chains (GSCs) and to increase commitment, support, and resources for the work of the Vision Zero Fund.

## Acknowledgements

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Finally, the VZF team would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to the 60+ high level forum panellists and 18,000+ participants from over 90 countries around the world, who joined the event over the three days. Without them, the event, and this report, would not have been possible.

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# Executive Summary

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The ILO aims to create worldwide awareness of the dimensions and consequences of work-related accidents, injuries and diseases and to place the health and safety of all workers on the international agenda. The ILO Vision Zero Fund (VZF) is a G7 initiative and an important component of the ILO Flagship Programme Safety and Health for All that supports this objective. It aims to prevent work-related deaths, injuries and diseases in selected sectors operating in global supply chains (GSCs). The VZF seeks to increase collective public and private action that will foster and enhance occupational safety and health (OSH) prevention activities in businesses operating in least developed, low - and lower-middle income countries.

The VZF High Level Forum was convened to present and discuss some of the most important and promising responses to this challenge, particularly considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The three-day event took place virtually from 23-25 February 2021. More than 18,000 people from 90 + countries followed the forum and contributed via live video streaming and social media. This Report highlights the discussion of key initiatives driving collective action to strengthen national and workplace OSH systems, policies and capacity as enabling conditions to foster a culture of prevention, with a particular focus on global supply chains.

The VZF model of collective action is a multi-stakeholder approach that involves governments, workers, employers, civil society, and others working together so that each meets its respective OSH responsibilities. It calls for constituents to commit to a transparent knowledge base; effective social dialogue; clear and measurable action plans; and ensuring that key actors have the capacity to implement agreed actions. Meaningful reductions in the global number of occupational accidents, diseases and deaths will not be achieved unless key stakeholders in global supply chains work collectively. GSCs account for around 80 per cent of global trade, provide millions of jobs and are a critical driver of social and economic development. While evidence indicates that supply chain relations can negatively impact or maintain poor OSH outcomes, it also suggests that they can create opportunities to ameliorate these effects and contribute to supporting improvements in arrangements and outcomes for safety and health for workers.

The organization of this report tracks the structure of the Forum. The report therefore contains sections capturing the Forum proceedings in opening and closing plenary sessions, regional discussions, and issue-driven workshops. In this way, the reader can better locate issues of greater interest.



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## Foreword

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Just under 2.8 million women and men die every year from an occupational injury or disease. At least 2.4 million of these deaths are due to occupational disease, and a further 374 million workers experience a non-fatal work injury. Every single day approximately 7,400 people die from occupational accidents or diseases and over one million workers are injured at work<sup>1</sup>. This endless toll of injuries, illnesses and deaths continues unabated because people must go to work to support themselves and their families, even during a pandemic.

These injuries, illnesses and deaths can be prevented. This report summarizes the main findings and recommendations from the Vision Zero Fund High Level Forum, which took place on 23-25 February 2021. The Forum highlighted innovative efforts to improve OSH in global supply chains, by sharing perspectives and examples of VZF's project work in GSCs. The innovative and comprehensive interventions collected in this Report map a clear way forward, highlighting an array of initiatives, reforms and collective actions that have brought improvements in OSH policies, practices and proficiency.

Launched in 2015, the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) is a G7 initiative that has received the endorsement of the G20. It aims to prevent work-related deaths, injuries and diseases in selected sectors operating in global supply chains (GSCs). VZF's main objective is to promote and support collective public and private action to increase occupational safety and health (OSH) prevention in businesses operating in low income countries. The VZF is a multi-donor trust fund, and welcomes contributions from governments, intergovernmental or nongovernmental organizations, and from private sources including

<sup>1</sup> See ILO, Safety and health at the heart of the future of work, building on 100 years of experience. Geneva, 2019.



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companies and foundations. The International Labour Organization (ILO) administers the Fund as part of its Flagship Programme Safety and Health for All, and implements its projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic the world is experiencing is a harsh reminder of the importance of safety and health at work. Stopping the pandemic in its tracks demands a renewed commitment to OSH, particularly in GSCs, which form the foundation of global trade. The VZF is well positioned to advance collective action for improved OSH in GSCs. The Fund's core strategy to mobilize collective efforts by key stakeholders to tackle the root causes of workplace accidents, injuries and diseases in GSCs has already shown significant impact.

The challenge of correcting OSH deficits in GSCs requires a sustained response, and sustained resources. The Forum discussion made clear that collective actions sponsored by the VZF can build a safer and more secure future for workers in GSCs. This comprehensive account of the work of the Fund could not be timelier, as the need for improvements in global OSH has never been more pressing.



**Joaquim Pintado-Nunes**

Chief, Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch, ILO

## PLENARY SESSION 1

# OSH in global supply chains in times of COVID-19

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### Objective

To facilitate a dialogue on how recent achievements and occurrences in the OSH arena have affected OSH in GSCs, and reflect on VZF's current and future role in advancing towards the goal of zero severe and fatal accidents and diseases in GSCs.

### Speakers

**Guy Ryder**

Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Hubertus Heil**

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

**Ergogie Tesfaye**

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (via video message)

**Roberto Suárez Santos**

Secretary-General, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

**Owen Tudor**

Deputy General-Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

### Moderator

**Conny Czymoch**

Independent international moderator and journalist

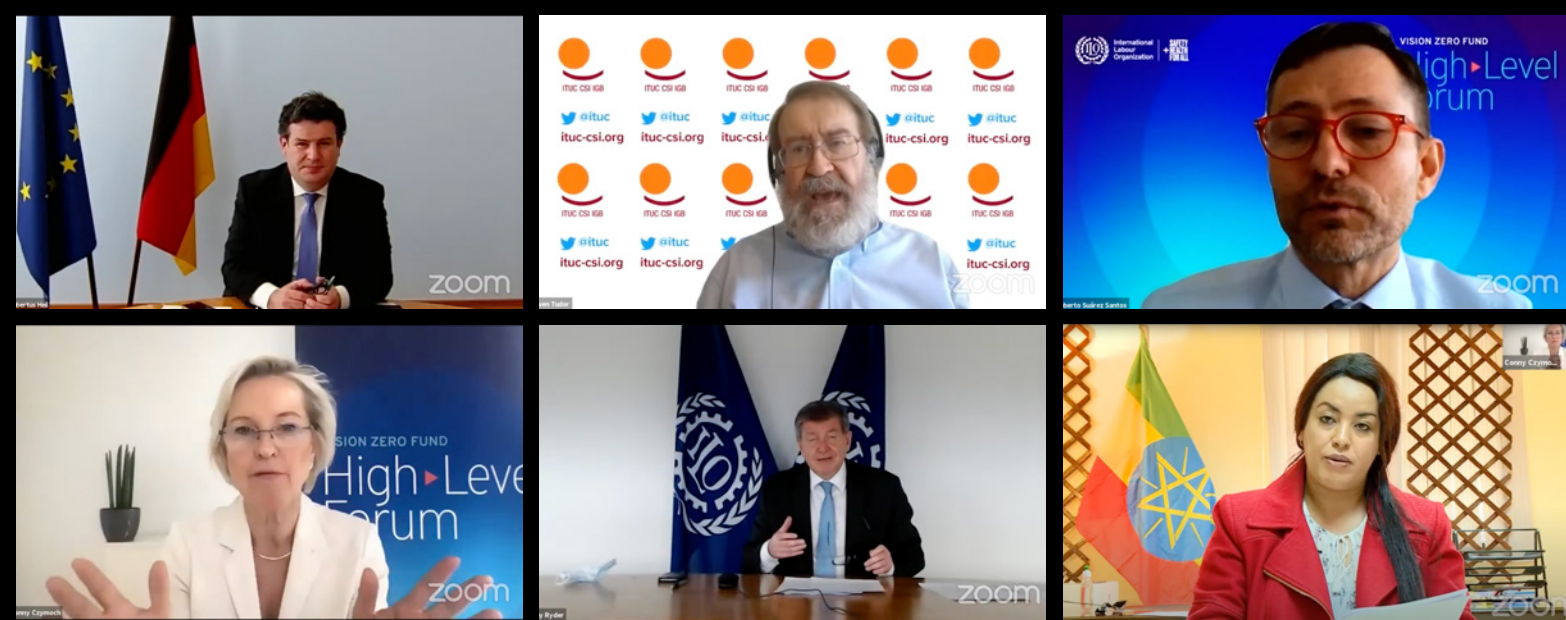
### Session summary

**Director General Ryder (DG)** opened the Forum by reminding the participants that every year, almost 2.8 million people worldwide die from injuries or illnesses due to work that they do or have done. This toll is in effect a permanent pandemic and tragically, most of these deaths are preventable.

The DG noted that preventing deaths and injuries in global supply chains is what the Vision Zero Fund was set up to do. Its model of collective action has a special role to play. By bringing stakeholders together, the VZF is building solutions that will be the most likely to succeed in creating a better, safer, and more sustainable future for those working in GSCs. Therefore, this Forum is a timely and important demonstration of the ILO's commitment to working with all actors to realize this objective.

The DG observed that the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the essential importance of safety and health at work, and what happens when OSH systems are under-resourced and unprepared, and working people are insufficiently protected. Indeed, a lack of safe and healthy working conditions in just one

The recording of this session is available here >



workplace can affect multiple businesses, communities and countries. The consequences of unsafe working conditions include increases in poverty, damage to business and economies, and an increased burden on social protection systems.

The DG also reminded Forum participants of the ILO's longstanding efforts in protecting workers against sickness, disease and injury for more than 100 years. He emphasized that the concept of a rights-based approach to safety and health is gaining ground, in line with the terms of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Target 8.8, which aims to

“protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”

At the ILO's Centenary International Labour Conference, safe and healthy working conditions were confirmed as being fundamental to decent work.

**Minister Heil** opened his remarks by noting that poor OSH can have devastating consequences to the lives and livelihoods of workers. A truly fair globalization must encompass safe and healthy working conditions for all workers, including those in GSCs. It is past time for enacting stronger global commitments to OSH, including its inclusion as an ILO core labour standard.

The VZF was set up under the German G7 Presidency specifically to improve OSH in GSCs. The Fund makes an important contribution at

the beginning of the supply chain, especially by involving the social partners in reducing workplace accidents. VZF's promotion of ILO labour standards in this context also establishes clear benchmarks for all companies to fulfil their legal and ethical responsibilities.

The Minister remarked that especially during the pandemic, the VZF has proven its ability to react quickly, implementing preventive COVID-19 countermeasures in Laos, Vietnam and elsewhere. VZF has achieved important successes in its partner countries, but more companies need to join in taking responsibility for improving the lives of workers in supply chains.

Minister Heil closed his remarks by observing that member States should consider making companies jointly responsible for ensuring decent work all along the supply chain. For its part, Germany is preparing to enact a new law on corporate due diligence which would allow worker representatives, trade unions and NGOs to represent victims of substandard working conditions in German courts. This kind of legislation can serve as a model for other countries to adopt.

**Minister Tesfaye (via video message)** opened her remarks by recognizing that inclusive and job-rich growth through decent work is the catalyst for achieving Ethiopia's development objectives. The national policy is designed to propel Ethiopia into a beacon of African prosperity by the year 2030, with the development of the Garment and Textile sector being key priorities. For advancing this policy, she expressed the commitment of the Ethiopian government to ensuring fundamental rights and principles at work, while pursuing anti-poverty development policies and encouraging meaningful dialogue between the social partners. The country's recent ratification of all eight core ILO conventions is the evidence of its commitment to the Decent Work agenda.

Upon the launch of VZF activities in Ethiopia, a mapping of the Employment Injury Insurance (EII) system was conducted at national level, which resulted in an enhanced social security system. The VZF is now supporting efforts to establish a new National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and to digitalize the labour inspection process, including the recording and notification of OSH injuries and diseases, dispute prevention and settlement.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ethiopia declared a state of emergency to provide workers with protection against job losses and developed a workplace protocol and COVID checklist for employers. The VZF, under the ILO Siraye Programme, distributed educational materials about COVID-19 to 42 factories employing 45,704 (38,715 of whom are female). Over 265 advisory sessions were conducted to support factories in setting up OSH management systems and dialogue, to implement improvement plans and to mitigate issues involving COVID-19. In addition, the Ministry developed training modules on COVID-19 mitigation and Business Continuity Planning and Recovery; established COVID-19 taskforces; enhanced capacity of OSH committees; and conducted 35 workplace inspections to assess compliance. The Minister noted that with support from the ILO and BMZ the Government has launched a wage subsidy programme, which will benefit 40,000 workers in the textile and garment sector.

The Minister concluded by reiterating the commitment of the Ethiopian government to addressing decent work deficits in Ethiopia, and noted with appreciation the support that the ILO and the VZF is providing to help the country attain this important goal.

**Secretary-General Suarez** opened his remarks by noting that the pandemic has aggravated OSH issues in GSCs. The Secretary-General emphasized the need for all actors to engage in collective action to improve OSH, including strengthening labour inspections and recommitting to OSH, human rights, and the Decent Work agenda. He recommended acting in partnership, resulting in a multiplier effect and ensuring that improvements in GSCs benefit the entire workforce. It is not acceptable for only the employees of global corporations to gain improved working conditions. Declaring that capacity building is key to improving OSH, the Secretary-General affirmed that the IOE is committed to advancing OSH and human rights in partnership with all stakeholders.

**Deputy General-Secretary Tudor** opened his remarks by stating that the number one priority in the global trade union movement is to save lives at work. Mr Tudor stated that many believe that the true estimates of workplace deaths and injuries, are much higher than the ones available.

Mr Tudor said that health and safety should be a fundamental right at work as urged in the 2019 Centenary Declaration. Making OSH a fundamental right at work would ensure GSCs drive better, safer, and healthier conditions along the supply chains, instead of driving down standards and costs to the lowest level.

Noting the cost of OSH improvements, Mr. Tudor agreed that the VZF is an important means to direct that money to saving lives at work. But it is also essential to give workers the knowledge and the rights to use that knowledge themselves, so that they can demand protection from their employers, from the global brands and multinational enterprises (MNEs), and from government inspectors.

Global businesses must also behave better as part of legally mandated due diligence, and there needs to be stronger rules out of the UN, the ILO and the OECD. Without a UN treaty on responsible business conduct, an ILO Convention on due diligence in GSCs, and stronger MNE guidelines from the OECD, the VZF will only touch the tip of the iceberg.

Finally, Mr Tudor stated there needs to be a global effort to train doctors and researchers to ask those suffering from illness and injury

“what work do you do, and where do you work?”

Making COVID-19 a notifiable, reportable and compensable occupational disease under ILO Recommendation 194 would be a strong start.

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

The **moderator** opened the Q&A session by asking the ILO DG to speak to the ILO's work to ensure safe and health workplaces around the world, its response to the pandemic, and to the role that initiatives such as the VZF play in strengthening ILO's leading role.

The **DG** responded that it was encouraging to hear strong consensus on improving the state of global OSH. He mentioned that, in the last 100 years the ILO has learned that: (i) a normative framework must be combined with on-the-ground interventions; (ii) capacities of governments and workers' and employers' organizations need to be developed; and that (iii) the realities in which these capacities are used must first be understood.

Underscoring the VZF collective action approach, the DG noted that all stakeholders must become involved, because OSH issues do not exist in a vacuum: where rights are respected, participation is possible, workers can speak up, OSH inspections work better, and working conditions improve. More stakeholders need to come on board, and the global spirit of cooperation on this issue needs to be sustained, even if opinions differ.

**Minister Heil** responded that VZF fits well with Germany's programme of action to promote human rights and decent work in GSCs. Setting up the VZF was an important step in improving working conditions in GSCs, but not enough companies exercise due diligence on their own. Laws are needed to mandate due diligence on workers' rights. Germany's new law will require MNEs to engage with their entire GSC on human rights issues. Companies in Germany must now ensure there are no human rights violations in their supply chains. Companies that allow such violations will be penalized, albeit it is recognized that many companies need support to implement the law effectively. The Minister hoped that the new law will lead to similar laws in the EU and that new multilateral agreements and guidelines will sustain ongoing efforts to clean up GSCs. The VZF is exactly what is needed, but more resources are needed for this initiative, including financial support from MNEs.

**Mr Suarez Santos** remarked that the key to success in this arena is the meaningful involvement of key players on the ground. Building the capacities of key players, investing in local stakeholders and improving communication with buyers will pay dividends.

**Mr Tudor** responded that during the COVID-19 pandemic, front line workers in many occupations have been exposed to the

COVID-19 virus. These workers all too often have not had the social protection they need, and have contracted the virus or taken it home to their families. Workers in the informal sector and in the gig economy cannot afford to take time off to care for children or sick partners, or even to stay at home when they are ill. A lack of union representation has meant that testing has been inadequate, protective equipment too scarce, and work has not been organised to ensure social distancing or teleworking. He said that, in building back better, a raft of measures for recovery and resilience is needed: investment in jobs; better public services; equal treatment for women and minorities; universal social protection and a Global Social Protection Fund. These initiatives could be implemented with the support of the VZF.

**DG Ryder** then stated that 2021 has to be a year not just of recovery but of moving forward, including a vision for the future of work. That vision can be carbon neutral and consist of digital work, but it must be a form of work where no one dies from work; work must not require risking workers' health.

**Minister Heil** observed that the challenge of improving OSH in GSCs is hampered by a cleavage between due diligence laws mandating workplace improvements, and private initiatives drawing upon voluntary support. He said that OSH in supply chains is inadequate and a collective response is imperative. There must be multi-lateral commitments from governments and OSH must become a fundamental right of work. Companies must be mandated to take global responsibility and ensure the health and safety of their workers everywhere. Not enough progress has been made in the last five years and it is time to move forward together.

**Mr Tudor** stated that governments that are funding Vision Zero Fund must do more. As the G20 Labour Ministers noted when they expressed support for the Fund, this includes social dialogue because unions, safety staff and safety committees save lives at work. It has been six years since the VZF was launched by the German Government at the G7; four years since the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers added their support; two years since the ILO's Centenary Declaration. All of these initiatives took place before the pandemic broke out. The effect of COVID-19 on the world calls for asking one key question: If making health and safety at work a fundamental right – in supply chains and every part of the labour market – is not done now, when will it be done?

## WORKSHOP 1

# The VZF's work to date: global achievements, challenges, and future plans

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### Objective

This workshop was designed to provide an overview of VZF's work to date, in particular highlighting achievements, challenges, and future plans in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Speakers

**Jerson Razafimanantsoa**

Director General of Labour and Social Laws, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Civil Service and Social Laws, Madagascar

**Gustavo Solorzano**

Manager of legal affairs, Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP)

**Maura Patricia Hernandez Tapia**

Programme Coordinator, Confederation of Workers of Mexico (CTM)

**Mark Mittelhauser**

Associate Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs, U.S. Department of Labour

**Ockert Dupper**

Global Programme Manager, VZF, ILO

### Moderator

**Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard**

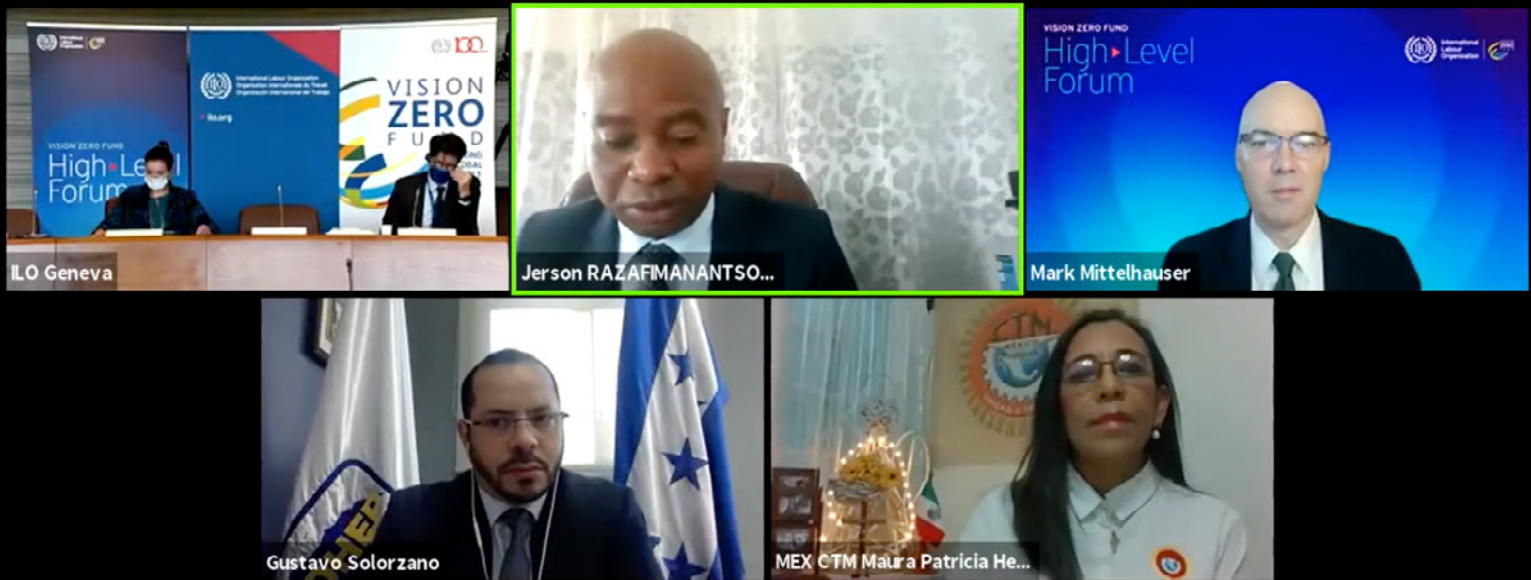
Director, Department of Partnerships and Field Support, ILO

### Session summary

**Mr Ockert Dupper** opened the panel by providing an overview of the VZF results and challenges that the VZF faced since its establishment in 2016. He began by mentioning that the first challenge faced by the VZF Secretariat was to translate the mandate given by the G7 into an effective global programme. This task was made easier because the Fund is managed by the ILO and is part of its Flagship Programme "Safety and Health for All". This meant that the VZF approach is embedded in International Labour Standards and tripartism, the Fund is able to use the ILO's convening authority to bring stakeholders together, and, finally, it gives the Fund access to significant OSH technical knowledge and expertise.

Since 2016, the VZF has developed an intervention framework that begins with mapping the supply chain through an OSH lens to identify risks and entry points for improvement, working at multiple levels of the supply chain: workplace, sectoral, national and global. It has also established a multi-stakeholder governance framework with the involvement of its development and social partners, and has implemented a portfolio of projects that have to date benefited more

The recording of this session is available here >



than five million workers in eight countries across three continents, and in three supply chains. To date, the Fund has worked in the garment, textile and agriculture sectors, although it recently entered a new high risk sector, construction.

The VZF has started to generate much-needed knowledge and research on safety and health in global supply chains that is being used to inform project design and to engage with partners to devise joint solutions. It has joined forces with other ILO initiatives (such as Better Work and SCORE) to achieve greater impact. It is also partnering with ILO's Tech for Decent Work initiative to generate better data on OSH conditions at the lower end of GSCs. One solution involves the use of a chatbot to gather data on OSH directly from those not reached through standard survey methods. This is being piloted in Mexico with plans to expand to other countries, including Vietnam.

Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Dupper mentioned that the VZF responded rapidly thanks to its relationships of trust with the Fund's constituents, and to the flexibility of donors and development partners. VZF is assisting workers and employers to safely reopen workplaces. To expand the impact of its COVID-19 response beyond VZF countries, it is collaborating with the ILO-IFC Better Work Programme in the garment sector in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Mr. Dupper concluded by saying that all of these achievements have enabled the Fund to increase its donor and financial base ten-fold since starting operations in June 2016, which has allowed the VZF to reach more countries, more sectors, and more workplaces.

**Mr Jerson Razafimanantsoa** observed that until 2017, when VZF activities in his country started, the national OSH system was experiencing significant problems,

including: the absence of OSH from the labour administration's list of priorities; the general lack of institutional competency in OSH; the lack of resources allocated to safety and health at enterprise level, which resulted in significant deficits at the workplace level; and, finally, minimal coverage of temporary workers by occupational health services.

**Mr Gustavo Rafael Solórzano Díaz** expressed COHEP's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 8. COHEP sees great opportunities in the current VZF project "Improving OSH in the coffee supply chain in Honduras." He specifically acknowledged the support of the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) in initiating this important project, and to the European Commission (EC) for providing the funding.

COHEP recognizes that OSH is of great importance both economically and to the social development of workers, especially those in rural areas. COHEP is committed to protecting the OSH of all those involved in coffee production, especially during the pandemic. A great fear was that coffee exports—the most important agricultural activity in Honduras—would be adversely affected by the pandemic. However, the VZF developed a tool to protect workers' health during the pandemic while at the same time strengthening OSH prevention. New training initiatives in the coffee sector are helping to educate many Hondurans on the importance of OSH. The VZF project has allowed Honduras to better compete in global markets; it can sell coffee in compliance with the strict labour standards of highly industrialized countries, in line with its national policy of respect for human rights, and for the rights of workers.

**Ms Patricia Hernandez** noted that CTM's interest in collaborating with the VZF grew from the need to respond to the problem of OSH deficits in the sector. The project will

make it possible to provide better prevention and health protection programmes for workers in the coffee supply chain. Ms Hernandez expressed hope that the collaboration developed in the VZF project will improve working conditions throughout the targeted supply chain, and improve the implementation of national legislation, especially in regard to Mexico's ratification of ILO Convention 155. The pandemic exposed numerous compliance issues related to C.155.. Ms Hernandez also noted that there is a need for Mexico to increase stakeholder capacity to develop better OSH policies at national, sectoral and local levels.

**Mr Mark Mittelhauser** noted that the US has been a strong supporter of the VZF since its inception. USDOL is committed to VZF because of the importance of the topic and the need for urgent, collective action, especially during this pandemic.

VZF has done a great job in advancing its vision, operating strategically, and in mobilizing and allocating resources. The VZF multi-donor fund structure allows social partners and governments to pool resources and strengthen collective action and encourages all participants to play a part in improving OSH. In Mexico, the VZF effectively advances the goal of improving OSH in selected value chains, but also creates spill-over effects by improving the livelihoods of workers, strengthening the voice of workers and empowering women workers. Mr Mittelhauser expressed USDOL's hope that the VZF programme continues to grow and was particularly pleased with VZF's willingness to ask hard questions about how to be even more effective. The Biden-Harris administration recognizes that building back better must mean building back better for workers' safety and health.



## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

When asked to provide the Forum with specific examples of the impact of the Fund's work at global and country levels, including summarizing various challenges faced, **Mr Dupper** highlighted two aspects of VZF's work: the efforts at institutional and policy levels, and the VZF approach to collective action.

The Fund recognizes that the enterprise level gains (reduced accidents in project factories and agricultural workplaces, improved handling and storage of hazardous chemicals, increased awareness and use of safety equipment, etc.) must be complemented by strong legal and policy frameworks and the national institutions that implement them. A significant portion of the VZF's work is thus focused on the latter. Examples of VZF work at this level include: assisting Myanmar constituents to establish a national OSH training institute with a tripartite governance structure; helping Colombia extend OSH coverage throughout the agriculture sector; supporting Lao's adoption of the ILO's strategic compliance approach to help the labour inspectorate become more effective and efficient despite its limited resources; and in the lychee supply chain in Madagascar, supporting the registration of temporary workers with local occupational health services.

While the focus of the Fund's work is on prevention, it also works to ensure that workers are protected when they are injured or suffer from an occupational disease. The Fund therefore also supports EII systems in its project countries. In Myanmar, VZF developed streamlined procedures for submission of EII claims, which led to a 50% reduction in processing time, and a reduction in the number of steps required to submit claims for occupational accidents and injuries. The new streamlined procedures were piloted in two townships, benefiting 198,000 workers.

Finally, the Fund's work at institutional level allows VZF to have impact across all industries and not just in its selected supply chains.

Concerning the VZF collective action approach: In 2017, the G20 labour and employment ministers encouraged governments, social partners, local and international companies as well as NGOs to take collective action to prevent workplace accidents and to commit to implementing actions within the framework of the Fund. Based on this mandate, the VZF has made collective action a central component of its strategy. The approach is rooted in the idea that the root causes of OSH deficits in GSCs

are complex and multi-faceted and cannot be addressed by one actor alone. It requires an approach that involves a wide range of stakeholders acting collectively. The model has been implemented with success in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Mexico, and the VZF is now intent on advancing this mandate at global level. The VZF continues to believe that global implementation of the collective action model needs to be informed by data and evidence gathered at country level.

**Mr Jerson Razafimanantsoa** then took the floor, stating that the activities of the VZF in the Litchi sector in Madagascar has made it possible to assure international customers about the quality of the products despite an outbreak of the bubonic and pneumonic plague in the country in 2017. Pilot interventions were carried out with seven companies of the GEL (*Groupement des Exportateurs du Litchi*), which saved nearly 25,000 jobs and 20,000 tonnes of lychee produced in the Tamatave region in 2017. In addition, 2,435 seasonal workers were registered with occupational health services thanks to awareness-raising and training activities carried out by a multidisciplinary team under the auspices of the VZF.

The Labour Inspection Task Force established by the ILO and the VZF has received OSH training, which improved the quality of monitoring visits to almost 1,634 enterprises since 2019. Nearly 60,000 workers have also been sensitized and trained on OSH. VZF support during the Covid-19 pandemic has also enabled the Government to support 1,233 enterprises (including those in the textile and informal sectors), including 82,475 workers, to prevent the spread of the virus in the workplace.

Through the implementation of the VZF, the National Government is paying closer attention to OSH issues and based on the results achieved by VZF, it has integrated occupational safety and health as one of the priorities of the Multisectoral Emergency Plan (2020-2021). These results have led to a reevaluation of the role of labour inspection in promoting occupational safety and health in Madagascar. To this end, the government made all-terrain vehicles available to the labour inspectorate to facilitate their mobility and access to enterprises.

Mr. Razafimanantsoa noted that VZF has helped many different actors to become more aware and confident in their roles, which has proven especially valuable during the pandemic. The

Malagasy Government is very pleased with the visible progress made in OSH since the implementation of the VZF project. The project has contributed to the implementation of the State's General Policy on Decent Work and the Madagascar Emergence Plan (PEM, 2019-2023) entitled "Promotion of decent work for all". On behalf of the Malagasy Government, he took the opportunity to thank the ILO and the VZF for the support provided, and expressed the Government's wish to see the VZF continue its interventions in Madagascar to promote OSH.

**Mr Gustavo Rafael Solórzano Díaz** mentioned that coffee is the most important agricultural activity in Honduras: it supports 120,000 Honduran families and generates one million jobs in the country (out of an economically active population of 4.2 million. More than 90% of the coffee produced in Honduras is destined for export, making it the third largest producer in the Americas and the fifth largest in the world, and production has doubled in the last decade.

Companies are committed to adding value to Honduran coffee, and to providing better working conditions in the sector. Over 80% of production comes from small and medium-sized producers, and given the importance of the sector, the VZF project has great relevance and impact. Through the project, Honduras has started to change mind-sets across the entire coffee supply chain and has seen significant progress in a short period of time. The government recognizes that continued improvements will depend on the promotion and support of social dialogue. All actors share responsibility in this area; the commitment of employers to apply the practices developed in the project is critical, as is the commitment and knowledge of workers in the fields.

The activities implemented by the Fund greatly assist Honduras to meet the objectives of the ILO in generating and promoting decent work and respect for human dignity. The experience with the VZF has been extraordinary and produced important results, allowing Honduras to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the coffee sector. Mr Díaz requested the Fund to expand its work in Honduras to other regions and high-risk sectors in the country, such as the Maquila textile sector, which employs 160,000 workers directly, and the construction sector, which employs approximately 150,000 workers.

**Ms Hernandez** said that the VZF is playing an essential role in strengthening OSH culture at all levels, and throughout the supply chain, with an approach that respects the relationship between ILO fundamental rights and the right to occupational safety and health in line with the ILO's decent work approach. She expressed a desire for more direct work on OSH with trade union organizations, including global alliances with the private sector; an emphasis on the contribution of OSH to productivity, and its value as an economic investment; the involvement of academia in analysis and knowledge sharing; the development of new VZF programmes; and increased international cooperation.

**Mr Mittelhauser** expressed USDOL's support for a new VZF intervention in Mexico, which is particularly relevant in the context of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement on Trade (USMCA). The VZF project will support Mexico to comply with the provisions of the USMCA, particularly those related to OSH. The US has included labour provisions in trade agreements for many years, fully recognizing the linkage between workers' rights and trade benefits. The labour standards in those trade agreements draw on ILO standards, including the importance of social dialogue and technical cooperation on OSH. USDOL has funded technical assistance programmes to strengthen workers' rights for decades, and is pleased to work with the VZF to promote safe and healthy workplaces. The VZF has also developed useful tools to address OSH during the pandemic. USDOL hopes that VZF projects will continue to focus on women workers, reach out to employers, and increase the voice of workers.

**Mr Dupper** closed the discussion by noting the Fund's strong mandate from G7, which together with the ILO's convening power has driven a global conversation on the root causes of OSH deficits in GSCs. The VZF has found that in working across different sectors, its insistence on starting with a comprehensive mapping of the supply chain has identified the best entry points for project activities. The mapping exercise informs the dialogue with stakeholders to build the framework for collective action on OSH. Consequently, the changes brought about by VZF project interventions are more sustainable, and more deeply embedded in key institutions at country level.

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION 1

# How improved OSH facilitates access to global supply chains: The VZF experience in Asia

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### Objective

To share good OSH practices implemented in VZF project countries in Asia, and to demonstrate how OSH improvements can lead to increased productivity and better market access. The topics raised include collective action on issues of common concern such as agrochemicals, climate change, and the role of cooperatives.

### Speakers

**Tran Thi Lan Anh**

Deputy Secretary General of VCCI Vietnam

**Sengchanh Khammountha**

Vice President Lao Coffee Association

**Thai Quynh Mai Dung**

Director, International Department, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)

**Shruti Patidar**

Regional Land and Freedom Officer, IUF Asia and Pacific

**Marian Boquiren**

Value Chain Development Specialist

**Mariana Infante**

Chief Technical Advisor, VZF Myanmar, ILO

**Kallene Ryan**

Independent researcher

**Kristina Kurths**

Chief Technical Advisor, VZF Laos and Vietnam, ILO

### Moderator

**Rene Robert**

Specialist in Labour Administration and Labour Inspection, ILO Decent Work Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific

### Session summary

**Ms Marian Boquiren** opened the discussion by providing a broad overview of the socio-economic significance of OSH in agriculture in Asian economies, the main OSH deficits encountered by VZF research, and the work that the VZF is carrying out to address them.

She mentioned that, in Laos, the VZF project is focused on the coffee supply chain but has begun work in the banana subsector. Robusta coffee beans are sold mainly to Vietnam through border trade, while Arabica beans are exported to Europe, the United States, Japan, and others. In Myanmar, VZF works primarily in the ginger subsector with spillover to other crops through collaboration with community actors, government, and market actors. Ginger is sold through border trade where price is the most important criteria. Some product is also exported to Germany, United States, and Canada, where buyers and governments expect compliance with social and environmental standards. Compliance with social standards including OSH, is fast becoming the norm and a prerequisite to participation in these supply chains. Recent trade agreements in the region include OSH among the labour standard provisions.

For the border trade in both countries, the biggest contribution of OSH is increased efficiency and worker productivity, which

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improves price competitiveness. Farmers with improved OSH practices - particularly in relation to chemical use - are now the preferred suppliers of ginger processors and exporters. In Laos, OSH compliance is increasingly important as coffee exporters and processors are shifting towards premium and specialty markets. Good OSH practices translated to business continuity in Laos, where export sales of coffee in 2020 were 36% higher than in 2019.

Ms Boquiren then highlighted key points concerning the VZF work in agriculture:

VZF work in the agriculture initially focused on training farmers and farmworkers to better recognize OSH hazards. Gaining the trust and commitment of farmers required the project to first identify small changes and low cost improvements that addressed OSH and productivity. Over time the project built confidence and buy-in among market actors for bigger OSH improvements. Chemical usage were made safer through correct use of PPE, integrated pest management, and shifting to organic farming. Smaller coffee farms selling to specialty markets took the organic pathway to address the issue. In Myanmar, transition to organic farming was done incrementally to meet maximum residue limits imposed by export markets.

VZF interventions aimed at improving safety in weeding, pruning, and harvesting in coffee plantations required the project to illustrate that the safety benefits will better protect workers and outweigh any costs of implementation. In the project, more than 80% of trained coffee farmers implemented OSH improvements including on workplace organization, electrical and machine safety, chemical safety, welfare facilities, and environmental protection. In identifying potential OSH improvements, an important requirement in both the ginger and coffee subsectors was to show a clear business case.

Exposure to occupational risks is highly correlated with vulnerability of employment. Farmers and workers that were not members of unions, associations or cooperatives were more vulnerable to occupational risks than organized workers. In the region, farm work is increasingly done by daily and seasonal workers, who work at high levels of economic stress without access to social security benefits. Extreme climatic events, such as floods, storms, and droughts are becoming more frequent and intense, creating heightened risks for agricultural workers. For example, higher temperatures can increase pest and weed infestations, requiring

application of increased chemicals. Hot weather also increases the risk of heat stress/stroke and fatigue, while threatening lower crop yields. Consequently, OSH prevention is linked to building climate resilience.

**Ms. Kallene Ryan**, a researcher and monitoring and evaluation specialist, worked with VZF in Myanmar to develop an assessment of project work in the ginger and garment GSCs. In Myanmar, the outcome and practice assessment addressed four themes: Service Delivery; Productivity; Institutional Development; and Collective Action. In all four areas, the project has achieved important successes. OSH is becoming a significant change catalyst due to its links to worker rights, product quality and productivity. Social dialogue has increased, and key actors are developing a long term vision for the ginger sector that includes strong OSH protections. The project has also facilitated more effective social dialogue in the garment sector.

**Ms Mariana Infante Villarroel** identified several key factors driving the success of VZF in Myanmar. These included opening a full time field office in Taunggyi, Shan State, that enabled the project team to engage directly and regularly with farmers and community stakeholders from different townships. In the garment sector, there was interesting take-up among workers of the business case for OSH, which they use in framing their OSH concerns to management. VZF has also discovered that building upon small successes opens the door to more resource-intensive OSH improvements. She also noted that Myanmar is presently developing new OSH regulations for agriculture, which will be supported by the project. However, in the meantime, the project is moving ahead with the implementation of practical OSH activities. The project has also contributed significantly to improving service delivery in the EII system. The results of the pilot project showed a 75% decrease in claims processing times that benefitted nearly 200,000 workers in the garment sector. The project also used its convening power to organize multi-stakeholder ginger stakeholder events, which opened new markets for local actors. This enabled ginger sector actors directly experience the business case for OSH.

**Ms Kristina Kurths**, highlighted a series of initiatives involving local stakeholders, government officials and worker organizations in Lao PDR. These included an information campaign on social security benefits for smallholder farmers, which allowed them to access entitlements for work accident productivity losses. Targeted OSH improvements at the provincial level had positive



spill-over effects in other areas. A strong training collaboration with agriculture research institutes resulted in 80% of trained farmers implementing OSH improvement measures.

**Mr Sengchanh Khammountha** remarked that VZF brought together key stakeholders effectively, and that OSH training conducted village by village has led farmers to adopt protective measures. He believes the project can be scaled up to other regions of the country, as health improvements, productivity, and workplace impact have been significant.

**Ms. Tran Thi Lan Anh** noted that Vietnam exports coffee to more than 80 countries, generating three billion USD annually. Over 600,000 workers are employed in the sector, made up mostly of small household farmers. The farmers understand that to gain the benefit of new free trade agreements, OSH compliance is necessary. However, the sector lacks reliable data on OSH injuries and diseases because of the lack of reporting. The VCCI wants to improve OSH in the coffee sector to gain access to certifications in EU and US markets that will mean higher prices, and is looking forward to working with the Fund to realizing this goal.

**Ms. Thai Quynh Mai Dung** observed that the new VZF project in the coffee supply chain is welcomed by the VGCL. VGCL aims to strengthen its understanding of OSH and to engage effectively with other stakeholders in collective action.

**Ms Shruti Patidar** commented that the IUF has received OSH training and aims to use that information to increase its bargaining power. On tea plantations, most of the workers are women who are largely unrepresented. The IUF is supporting women workers organizations to organize at the local levels to implement positive OSH change.

In the discussion that followed, **Ms Ryan** stated that cooperatives can establish systems to monitor OSH, but need more support. Behavioural change in OSH is driven by practices that promise increased profit or productivity. **Ms. Mariana Infante** indicated that in Myanmar, there has not yet been an opportunity to experience the impact of free trade agreements. The current project emphasis is on meeting requirements for entry into global markets.

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION 2

# Systematic approach to strengthen OSH institutions for sustained improvements in OSH practices: VZF experiences from the garment sector in Africa

### Objective

To contribute to the mobilization of national and international private and public stakeholders to take collective action for safer and healthier garment supply chains in Africa this discussion: (i) shared experiences and good practices on strengthening OSH institutions' capacities and collaboration, and (ii) discussed current knowledge on the impact of COVID-19 on OSH in textile/garment GSCs and how collective responses addressed the impact of the pandemic.

### Speakers

#### **Hanitra Fitiavana Razakaboana**

Regional Director of Labour, Employment, Public Service and Social Laws Analamanga, Madagascar

#### **Beatrice Chan**

Vice-president of GEFP and Member of Grouping of Companies of Madagascar (GEM)

#### **Botoudi Remi Henri**

National Coordinator of CTM, Madagascar

#### **Fikadu Gebru**

Director Harmonious Industrial Relation Directorate, Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia

#### **Dawit Moges**

Vice-President, Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federations

#### **Angessom Yohannes**

President, Industrial Federation of Ethiopian Textile, Leather and Garment Worker Trade Union

### Moderators

#### **Ana Catalina Ramirez, Frédéric Laisné-Auer and Evans Lwang**

ILO

### Session summary

The moderator started the discussion of VZF projects in Africa with a presentation on the key drivers and constraints for OSH improvement in Madagascar and Ethiopia, with reference to the GSC in those countries and the need for improving institutional capacity. Key constraints identified by the VZF's initial assessment in both countries were limited enforcement capacity; a need for technical OSH resources; limited OSH data; and the need to strengthen OSH management systems.

**Ms Hanitra Fitiavana Razakaboana** opened the discussion by pointing to recent efforts to strengthen labour inspection on OSH. A train-the-trainer approach was used to familiarize labour inspectors with the topic. In Madagascar, there are 22 regions and a total of 125 staff (technical and administrative) involved in labour inspection. Over 90% of enterprises in the country are in the informal sector. With VZF support, the training programme was included in the curriculum of the national school of public administration. In 2020, more than 1600 inspections were carried out, reaching 1,300 businesses and 80,000 workers. Over 10,000 workers were registered with the social protection scheme. She concluded by noting that since the VZF has been active in

the country, OSH in Madagascar is now a topic that is high on the national agenda and that the Ministry would like to extend the project to additional regions in the country.

**Ms Beatrice Chan** remarked that the employer group is aware of the importance of GSCs as 44% of its members operate in the garment/textile sector. This industry makes up 70% of exports of the employer group and about 20% of Madagascar's total annual exports. The national Social Protection Fund (CNAPS) covers formal enterprises and she highlighted some of the challenges the CNAPs faces in the agriculture sector (informality, isolation in rural areas). With VZF support, the employers increased their capacity to operate with COVID-19 restrictions, but more training and awareness raising on OSH is needed. A consensus exists among the formal employer community that stronger OSH management systems are needed in the textile supply chain, provided costs are managed. She concluded by remarking that women in textile are three times more affected by OSH deficits than men.

**Mr. Botoudi Emi Henri** responded that the workers organization prioritizes worker voice, compliance with labour laws, and the achievement of the Decent Work agenda. The CTM struggles in organizing the workforce due to the high number of workers in the informal sector. Thanks to VZF support, there has been an increase in CTM's coverage of workers, an improvement in access to occupational health services, and increased awareness of pandemic prevention measures.

**Mr Evans Lwanga** highlighted efforts made by the VZF in African participating countries to strengthen OSH information systems and to strengthen the concept of strategic compliance planning for labour inspection. In Ethiopia, the expansion of the export industries have placed increased demand on the labour inspection system. The key challenges here are a lack of OSH technical resources, coordination challenges, and planning limitations. With VZF support, technical training was provided to workers on a virtual platform and a comprehensive LI assessment was conducted with stakeholder participation. As the improvement plan is implemented, it will be scaled up to support delivery of labour inspection services in the agriculture sector.

**Mr Dawit Moges** expressed strong support for VZF efforts to strengthen the labour inspection system. He recognized that improved OSH reduces occupational accidents and illnesses, absenteeism, labour abuses, and labour disputes, thereby lowering the cost of doing business. He expressed hope that the new labour inspection system will help reduce decent work deficits, which impede growth and productivity. He noted that new systems and technologies in labour inspection should be accompanied by adequate safeguards for data protection, privacy and business confidentiality. He closed his remarks by expressing the commitment of the employers' association to working with ILO and Vision Zero Fund to achieve these goals.

**Mr Angesom Yohannes**, also expressed support for the new labour inspection management system, but reminded participants of the need to build the capacity of labour inspectors and to promote uniform standards in industrial relations, labour relations and OSH services. Stronger compliance monitoring of workplaces will incentivize employers to meet national standards and overcome deficiencies in labour practices. He highlighted grievance mechanisms as an area where improvement is urgently needed. He mentioned that in the garment sector, there are few effective safety committees and continuing problems in the supply of PPE. Social dialogue on OSH issues is hampered by a lack of meaningful data. He urged all stakeholders to increase participation in and collaboration with the VZF project.

### Questions and Answers (Q&A)

During the Q&A session that followed, Ethiopian panellists emphasized the importance of completing the transition to the new labour inspection management system, strengthening social dialogue on OSH, and improving institutional coordination. The Malagasy panellists urged stronger stakeholder coordination through the establishment of a designated focal point or platform, as well as an extension of OSH coverage to the agriculture sector. All parties urged stronger stakeholder coordination on OSH in GSCs.

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION 3

# Challenges and opportunities for improving workers' OSH in the coffee global supply chain: VZF experiences in Colombia, Honduras and Mexico

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### Objective

To share experiences on how collective action can be an effective model for coffee stakeholders in the region to address OSH challenges, including those in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, participants will be informed about the latest VZF research findings in relation to the safety and health of coffee workers, including new challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and discuss how different stakeholders can work together to address these challenges.

### Speakers

**Sebastian Zaleski** (Opening remarks)  
Sebastian Zaleski, Council, Economic and Trade Division, European Union, Delegation to Mexico

**Ligia Stella Chaves Ortiz**  
Vice Minister of Labour Relations, Ministry of Labour, Colombia

**Santiago Arguello**  
Director of the Promotion of Agriculture Unit, Secretary of Agriculture, Mexico

**Ligia Borrero Retrespo**  
Legal Director, National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia

**José Luis Barradas**  
Familia Rogers, México

**José Julio Espinoza**  
National Peasant Confederation, México

**Joel Almendares**  
Unitary Central of Workers Honduras

**Pilar Cariño**  
Researcher and global supply chain specialist

**Carlos Ariel García**  
Center for Regional Coffee Growers and Business Studies (CRECE)

**Renato Bignami** (Closing remarks)  
OSH Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

### Moderator

**Rodrigo Mogrovejo**  
Chief Technical Advisor, VZF, ILO

The recording of this session is available here >





## Session summary

**Sebastian Zaleski** opened the session by stressing three points – the importance of the VZF project in Mexico as the country continues to develop its coffee sector; the need to generate and disseminate data about the supply chains in an easy, visual manner; and the timeliness of VZF support as Mexico works to meet its commitments to labour standards and sustainable development in the context of a new free trade agreement.

The next speaker was **Ms Pilar Cariño**. He noted that OSH capacity building needs are generally consistent across countries in Latin America. There are strong incentives to strengthen public institutions, and improve market access for GSCs, but there is also a high level of labour informality and a lack of accurate information about OSH, which hampers the provision of targeted technical assistance.

**Ms Ligia Stella Chaves Ortiz** noted the importance of OSH education and training to reduce workplace accidents in the coffee sector. In Colombia, with ILO and VZF support, the sector focused on strengthening OSH prevention and improving compliance with safety standards. Fifty percent of the farmers are smallholders for whom it is important to package OSH information in a convenient toolbox.

**Ms Ligia Borrero** noted the establishment of a public-private association between the Colombian National Coffee Growers Federation and the government to support coffee growers in improving OSH.

**Mr Santiago Argüello** added that in Mexico the coffee sector has grown significantly since the year 2000. The main challenge is reaching a large number of small growers. Institutional development, regulatory compliance, training, and access to occupational health services are the main priorities.

**Mr Joel Almendares** observed that one of the challenges for improving OSH in his country is that it is not a trade union priority. Even where it is a priority, there is no trade union representing coffee workers in Honduras, which makes it very difficult to negotiate workplace safety issues with business owners.

**Mr. José Julio Espinoza Morales** observed that the government has not prioritized workplace safety in agriculture, and that improving awareness of this issue was a state responsibility that could not be left to the private sector. For the producers, OSH was seen primarily as an economic issue, not a question of worker rights. Consequently, labour unions have an important role to play in shifting public perceptions on the need for improved OSH in agriculture.

**Mr Carlos Ariel García** presented the findings of a VZF study on temporary workers in coffee production. The study revealed that the most serious OSH accidents usually occur during the harvest, and that workers rarely report their injuries. Also, there is a lack of PPE and safety training.

**Mr Jose Luis Barradas** stated that to strengthen OSH in enterprises, the greatest needs related to training, PPE, machine guarding, the standardisation of work practices, and the need to modernize equipment.

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

A number of issues were discussed during the Q&A section.

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, **Mr Santiago Argüello** mentioned that the pandemic had imposed a new reality on the sector, and that ILO support was needed to establish OSH protocols that would permit the agriculture sector to operate safely.

**Ms Ligia Borrero**, noted that in April 2020, with the support of the ILO and VZF, Colombia established a protocol for mitigating the impact of COVID-19 before the commencement of the coffee harvest, which was also used in other agriculture sub-sectors. This helped to avoid job losses during the pandemic.

In relation to workers' employment injury insurance (EII), **Mr José Luis Barradas** noted that there was resistance in the sector to paying EII premiums, and that this reluctance needed to be overcome through government involvement. **Mr Joel Almeyda** agreed, noting that in Honduras, most workers in the coffee sector are informal and not covered by any EEI system.

In relation to awareness raising and training, **Ms Ligia Chaves** noted the success of a series of radio programmes (in the form of a ten episode soap opera) that was developed in

collaboration with the ILO and VZF. The radio programmes used to disseminate information about COVID and OSH protocols. **Mr Carlos García** said that the pandemic had raised awareness of OSH issues in agriculture.

**Ms Ligia Stella Chavez Ortiz** remarked that in Colombia, a survey developed with VZF support was being implemented to gain a better understanding of workers' knowledge and practices towards OSH. Data from the survey will be used in improved policymaking. **Mr Joel Almeyda** commented that from his perspective, vocational training could also facilitate OSH improvements, supported by social dialogue on workplace level challenges.

**Mr Santiago Argüello** reported that thanks to VZF, there have been enhancements in social dialogue and knowledge exchange, and new actors have been mobilized to improve working conditions for the benefit of all sectors, not just those working in coffee.

**Mr Renato Bignami**, OSH specialist in the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, closed the session by observing that the ILO sees OSH as central pillar of the effort to build back better after COVID-19, with an emphasis on South-South learning and capacity building to which this discussion has made an important contribution.

## WORKSHOP 2

# Occupational safety and health in global supply chains in times of COVID-19

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### Objective

To explore how supply chain relations can create opportunities for improving safety and health in global supply chains. The focus will be on “what works” to secure safe and healthy working conditions in global supply chains, thereby laying the groundwork for the subsequent plenary discussion that will explore how collaboration with the VZF (under its collective action approach) can support governments, business and social partners in their efforts to improve OSH in GSCs.

### Speakers

#### Antonio Cammarota

Principal Administrator, DG EMPL/B3,  
European Commission

#### Omar Estefan

Director General for Social Welfare, Secretary  
of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico

#### Matthias Thorns

Deputy Secretary-General, IOE

#### Sittichoke Huckuntod

Director, Health, Safety and Environment  
(HSE) Nike

#### Paapa Kwasi Danquah

Legal Officer, ITUC

#### Glen Mpufane

Director of Mining, Diamond, Gem, Ornament  
and Jewellery Processing, IndustriALL

### Moderator

#### Githa Roelans

Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise  
Engagement Unit, ILO

### Session summary

**Ms Githa Roelans** opened the discussion by noting that her unit (Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement, or MULTI) provides policy advice and technical support for the implementation of the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), and leads the ILO’s engagement on the UN Guiding Principles on Business Human Rights, the OECD MNE Guidelines, and the UN Global Compact. The purpose of this session is to take a closer look at the role that the different actors should or could play in driving improvements in safety and health in global supply chains.

**Mr Antonio Cammarota** addressed the efforts that the EC is making to boost OSH in GSCs. Mr Cammarota observed that there is now a converging process at ILO and EU level committed to ensuring that changes in the world of work can be translated into economic opportunities for all. The promotion of OSH standards and of a global culture of prevention is crucial not only to ensure compliance with human rights but also for the promotion of fair trade and investment policies. Progress

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in this field is being made, as shown by common efforts on GSCs and in EU trade agreements, which include chapters on trade and sustainable development.

**Mr Omar Estefan** outlined the steps undertaken by Mexico to advance OSH prevention. He noted that increasing public awareness of OSH has elevated social dialogue on the topic and the labour ministry has been asked to support this discussion. A system of certification and inspections has been implemented, and key actors are building a foundation for stronger OSH compliance. In Mexico, a programme has been started in which inspectors assist workplaces on improvement of working conditions, tied to tax benefits. More effective compliance assistance has led to a 60% improvement in the results of inspections.

**Mr Matthias Thorns** confirmed that under the UN Guiding Principles it is incumbent on all parties to seek, mitigate and link human rights through enterprises in the supply chains. Capacity building all along the supply chain is needed to raise awareness, develop new approaches, and increase labour standards compliance. Only then will spillover effects take place. Mr Thorns stressed the importance of social dialogue on OSH, integrated with the issues of global competitiveness and productivity. Governments also need to work harder to curb corruption, which hinders good OSH practices, and informality remains a persistent challenge. OSH compliance is most challenging in the informal sector. Social dialogue needs to occur in the informal

sector to support companies to register and formalize, and awareness raising efforts can help drive this process.

**Mr Sittichoke Huckuntod** stated that Nike's experience with OSH can be characterized by four stages: 1) Risk Management & Investigation, 2) Recognition & Monitoring, 3) Partnerships & Transparency, and 4) Disruptive Change. In the early to mid-90's Nike worked to define the labour and OSH issues in its supply chain, reactively managing risks. Once the problems were identified, a Code of Conduct and Code of Leadership Standards for suppliers that established the foundation for Nike's initial monitoring programs was developed. He explained that Nike realized that monitoring alone did not drive systemic change and improvement. As a result, it moved to develop partnerships that provided greater visibility into its supply chain. Nike joined the Apparel Industry Partnership, which later became the Fair Labor Association, and has endorsed the UN Global Compact for responsible international business practice. The company makes its monitoring results public and became the first industry brand to publish its list of finished goods suppliers. Nike supports the ILO/IFC Better Work Program, and considers broader collective action to be a critical enabler of disruptive change. Nike looks forward to working with the VZF and with others on this panel to take collective action to advance OSH.

**Mr Paapa Kwasi Danquah** emphasized that the ITUC has been calling for a new social contract consisting of five dimensions –

Jobs, Rights, Social Protection, Inclusion and Equality. The ITUC calls for a new global floor of labour rights in line with the ILO Centenary Declaration including OSH, living wages and minimum working time. The ITUC has released a new paper on mandatory human rights due diligence in global supply chains because workers bear the costs of substandard compliance. Workers in all sectors experience deficits in decent work, including in fashion and clothing supply chains and in ship breaking. This includes anti-union discrimination, wage violations and a high toll of OSH injuries and deaths. Children, young people, and women suffer disproportionately from the business model of hidden workers in supply chains. Companies, including MNEs, must be held accountable through mandatory due diligence processes and other regulations to protect the rights of all workers. As confirmed by a recent EU study, voluntary initiatives do not sufficiently incentivize good labour practices. The need for stronger regulation is even supported by the employer community.

To effectively address labour rights violations occurring in all tiers of GSCs, the obligation to conduct human rights due diligence should be imposed on all companies, regardless of their size, structure, or ownership. This obligation must extend throughout corporate

structures and business relationships, and cover all internationally recognized human rights, including labour rights. Business enterprises should be required to establish or participate in effective operational level grievance mechanisms with a view to identify and remediate adverse human rights impacts. Human rights due diligence obligations should be monitored by a competent public body, and violations of such obligations should carry effective and dissuasive sanctions. Indeed, the requirement to practice human rights due diligence and the requirement to remedy any harm resulting from human rights violations should be treated as separate and complementary obligations. Once the victim has proven the damage inflicted and the connection to the business activities of the company, the burden should shift to the company to show that it could not have done more to avoid harm. Finally, human rights due diligence should be informed by meaningful dialogue with trade unions.

**Mr Glen Mpufane** agreed that the presence of workers' unions in GSCs saves lives, and the accountability gap in most GSC companies needs to be closed. Especially in low- and middle-income countries that supply for high-income countries, there is a race to the bottom on labour standards, and the EU must do more to address this accountability gap.

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

**Mr Cammarota** observed that it is a priority for his organization to work with the ILO in the implementation and follow-up of the 2019 Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, including support for integration of the right to safe and healthy working conditions into the ILO framework of fundamental principles and rights at work. The EC also intends to continue its work to foster OSH prevention in GSCs and in all businesses operating in low and middle-income countries through continued support for framework initiatives such as the Vision Zero Fund, the G20 Safer Workplaces and OSH Experts Network, and the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact. It is necessary to include OSH standards in future EU trade agreements with effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and to support the ILO-led Global Coalition for Safety and Health at Work, which brings together different actors on topical issue of international OSH policy.

The EC will continue to promote decent work in the world as underlined in the political guidelines of the President of the Commission, the 2021 Commission Work Programme, the Communication on A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions and the recent initiative "Promote decent work worldwide." The EC is facing a wide range of social, economic and technological challenges. In this context OSH must be an integral element of investment and transformation at company level and throughout the economy. EU external action on OSH will be one of the main areas of effort under the new Strategic Framework, which is expected to be adopted later this year.

**Mr Estefan** stated that in Mexico, better information is needed on how GSCs operate and what the drivers and obstacles for better OSH are. GSCs clearly are structured differently in different sectors; clarifying these differences is crucial to ensure appropriate

OSH standard setting. Systemic change is occurring across the globe; closer attention to social dialogue and working conditions should take place while respecting national contexts. The VZF work in facilitating understanding of how supply chains work is important and should be continued.

**Mr Thorns** observed that collective action is critical. Due diligence in a selected supply chain is not enough; for achieving change and improving OSH for the entire workforce, stakeholders must mobilize through the collective action model. VZF needs increased support from the private sector, and its work must grow OSH culture from the grassroots up; top-down solutions will not work. Needs-driven interventions with the involvement of local actors is most likely to succeed as the VZF has shown in Ethiopia. Ultimately, OSH progress depends upon strong social dialogue, rule of law, and collective action. The VZF model deserves more support from the employer community.

**Mr Huckuntod** indicated that what is needed is greater collaboration with a broader and diverse group of stakeholders. This will create disruptive change and improve workplace conditions at a much faster pace. Developing 'shop floor skills' and engaging workers to participate in OSH activities should be a part of collective action initiatives. For example, IOSH and the FLA have partnered to develop a program for workplace safety facilitators, most of whom are line workers that are trained to engage on OSH topics with their peers. Nike has also seen the value of collective action through partnerships with ILO's Better Work Program. These programs go beyond compliance and seek to develop leadership capabilities and true

OSH management systems. Leaders who are ready to engage with the workers in their factories will be rewarded with stronger OSH performance. Professional consultancy organizations can help develop capacity at representative and worker level, thereby increasing the pace of change.

In less than a month, Nike will make its first ever public commitment to building world class OSH workplaces in its supply chain. He mentioned that Nike will not be able to achieve these commitments without partnership and collective action. Developing partnerships with credible organizations like VZF, professional organizations like IOSH, and others will be critical to achieve its commitments. Together, stakeholders can develop innovative solutions to make disruptive improvements to OSH in global supply chains.

**Mr Danquah** emphasized the need to work through legislative and regulatory mechanisms and collective bargaining to protect workers in GSCs. Mandatory human rights accountability will establish a floor of global protection. Collective action to build OSH prevention culture starts with the workers, and the foundation for their participation is collective bargaining rights.

**Mr Mpufane** noted that the ILO has a critical role to play in promoting collaboration and collective action on OSH. Voluntary initiatives can provide a potential platform for collective action but only if their implementation is truly transparent. For example, the responsible mining initiative has been effective. There needs to be stronger capacity of workers' representatives, particularly on OSH issues. OSH consultants can make an important contribution provided they are independent.

## PLENARY SESSION 2

# Collective action for safe and healthy supply chains: how can we collectively improve OSH in GSCs under the auspices of the VZF over the next 3-5 years?

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### Objective

Stakeholders will discuss how and to what extent the various efforts that they are taking to improve safety and health in global supply chains could be enhanced and furthered under the auspices of or in partnership with the VZF.

### Speakers

**Martha Newton**

Deputy Director-General for Policy, ILO

**Anousheh Karvar**

Delegate of the French Government to the ILO's Governing Body/ Labour & Employment Task Officer to the G7 and G20

**Ralf Franke**

Global Head of EHS, Siemens

**Kris de Meester**

Senior Adviser, Federation of Enterprises, Belgium

**Rory O'Neill**

Occupational Health and Safety Adviser, ITUC

**Sue Longley**

General Secretary, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

**Alan Stevens**

Director of Strategic Engagement, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

**Moderator****Joaquim Pintado-Nunes**

Chief, Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch, ILO

The recording of this session is available here >

## Session summary

The Moderator **Joaquim Pintado Nunes** welcomed all participants to this important final plenary session on VZF's collective action approach. He indicated that the focus will be on a discussion of how VZF's collective action approach can be used to promote collaboration among the different actors to improve OSH in GSCs.

Following an introduction of the panellists, the session began with a request to **Deputy Director General/Policy Martha Newton** to explain the value of VZF's collective action approach and how it contributes to the ILO's work on improving decent work in global supply chains. Ms Newton began by noting that the ILO's model of tripartite decision making mirrors the VZF's collective action model for OSH, acknowledging that tackling endemic OSH challenges requires the collective action, influence and resources of all major stakeholders in GSCs.

The DDG also observed that governments, business and social partners each have distinct roles to play in advancing decent work in global supply chains; the responsibility cannot fall to any single party acting alone. Accordingly, the 2017 ILO Resolution on decent work in global supply chains provides that governments, businesses and social partners have complementary but separate responsibilities in promoting decent work in global supply chains. The ILO programme of action seeks to drive policy coherence among relevant initiatives and processes related to this goal. The VZF collective action model therefore aligns with the ILO's structures, mode of operation, and the objectives of ILO's programme of action in GSCs, which call for stronger partnerships and policy coherence. Ms Newton also observed that VZF objectives complement the ILO MNE Declaration, which brings together governments, multinational enterprises, and workers' and employers' organizations to address decent work challenges and identify opportunities for inclusive growth.

DDG Newton noted that to date, more than five million workers have been reached through the VZF programme. She said that VZF is recognized as one of the ILO's core programmes for improving decent work in GSCs. Notable aspects of the VZF strategic approach are that it is scalable and directly supports the achievement of the SDGs where it operates. The DDG closed by encouraging all parties with a role to play in GSCs to join the VZF, which can mobilize in-kind technical and staff resources as well as financial resources. Only together these difficult challenges be solved.

**Ms Anousheh Karvar** noted that France has supported the VZF from its conception in 2015 at the meeting of the G7. She said that tragedies such as Rana Plaza raised questions about individual and collective responsibilities, and that France is determined that such situations should not happen again. She also mentioned that France was the first country to introduce legislation to improve working conditions in global supply chains with the adoption of the "Corporate Duty of Vigilance Law" in 2017. That law requires large companies to establish, publish, comply with and evaluate a "Vigilance Plan" that identifies risks and prevents serious violations of human rights, human health and safety and the environment throughout their sphere of influence, including subsidiaries and subcontractors. This law is a powerful lever for large companies to take action with their suppliers and subcontractors in producing countries. However, she indicated that this issue cannot be dealt with solely at the national level and from a legal perspective. To be truly effective, a level playing field needs to be created and a collective dynamic around the question of labour standards in GSCs.

Observing that many French companies have signed Global Framework Agreements, Ms Karvar urged the ILO to play a stronger role in this area. She said that OSH is important and that we should not be satisfied with one-off and uneven results. The VZF is well placed to avoid this, by bringing together the goodwill and energies of all OSH stakeholders. She concluded saying that, as with Alliance 8.7, there needs to be a strong global alliance to improve OSH in GSCs.

**Dr Ralf Franke** commented that Siemens was the first multinational enterprise to join the VZF in 2017, and recently extended its affiliation with the Fund. Siemens seeks to generate value for the societies in which it operates - that is what "business to society" means a company that works in over 200 countries around the globe. Siemens has the potential to have a lasting and positive impact on people and the environment, and is committed to making working conditions and work environments healthier and safer, especially in areas where those standards are poor. Mr Franke acknowledged that in many countries it is challenging to create a safe work environment not only for its own employees but also for all their partners. These challenges are shared with other MNEs. Instead of companies working in isolation to improve OSH, it makes better sense to team up.

For this reason, Siemens supports and engages with partners that share its ambition, such





as the VZF. Mr Franke cited the example of the “Charter of Trust”, which Siemens signed in 2018 along with other companies to establish binding rules and standards to build trust in cybersecurity and further advance digitalization. Another good example is the “Charter of Principles for Good Platform Work” initiated by the World Economic Forum to improve working standards in the gig economy. These examples show that a common approach is needed, sharing experiences, practical approaches and data, for the benefit of all.

Mr Franke closed by affirming that Siemens seeks to maintain and enable work environments where people can work safely, enjoy good health, and thrive both at work and in their contributions to society. Siemens looks forward to working with the VZF to develop these synergies.

**Mr Kris de Meester** began his remarks by enumerating the several reasons that the IOE is supportive of VZF. First, the VZF aims to level the playing field on OSH. Respect for OSH can be among criteria to selecting outstanding partners within a company’s supply chain. The IOE fully supports the view that ensuring a level playing field for all companies in GSCs is more effective and efficient. Second, if all parties unify around the VZF approach, its impact is amplified and there is greater visibility for the work of MNEs and employer organizations to improve OSH.

Turning to specific actions, he urged the VZF to draw from lessons learned at country and enterprise level. Investing in capacity

building will build global commitment to address the root causes of the problem. OSH implementation gaps can be bridged, but full engagement is critical to inform and support inclusive action at all levels, including all kinds of enterprises and not just the major players.

**Mr Rory O’Neill** stated that the trade union movement has long been committed to improving OSH conditions. This commitment has never been more visible than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr O’Neill remarked that unions have a positive impact on OSH through recruiting, retaining and developing the capacities of union members. Unions represent all the workers in the company, and deal on a regular basis with not only OSH issues but also labour protection, low pay, labour insecurity and the like.

The ITUC believes that in a globalized economy, the VZF is an example of how OSH can be improved in many different circumstances. However, the ILO needs greater resources to support existing OSH instruments, and to develop new ones for new forms of hazards. The workers call upon the ILO to make OSH its very highest priority. The pandemic has made clear how important this issue is for all workers.

**Ms Sue Longley** opened her remarks by reminding the Forum that OSH is a human right, not just an issue of productivity. She urged stronger regulation of the agriculture sector, and a means to address power imbalances in GSCs. Therefore, the VZF should focus more on ILO OSH standards and Codes and not adopt behavioural based



safety approaches. It is clear that OSH needs to be included among the fundamental rights recognized by the ILO, and there is also a role for global framework agreements and due diligence charters. However, the reality is that these standards mostly affect those who are working for a wage, not farmers running their own farms. Agriculture has the highest levels of child labour and workplace accidents. As the sector is highly regulated through food safety regulations, it should be possible to tackle OSH issues by strict regulation of subcontractors in the agri-food industry (Germany created such a law for its meat industry).

Ms Longley urged that farmers be given the same rights of collective action as industrial workers. Only through collective action can such persistent challenges such as safety and health, child labour and poor working conditions be eradicated. She also noted that stronger accountability along agricultural supply chains can address the problem of sexual violence. In closing, she urged the ILO to increase its funding for OSH, reverse budget cuts that have been made, and elevate the issue, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mr Alan Stevens** stated that IOSH members share a common vision for a safe and healthy world of work. The organization's ethos is that

through collaboration the OSH profession and the lives of the workers who their profession serves can be enhanced. The VZF provides the perfect vehicle for this coordinated action.

To drive a positive movement towards sustained OSH improvements, a strong system in which all parties embed good OSH practice into their work needs to be created. Mr Stevens complimented VZF's work in hard-to-reach sectors such as agriculture and garments. Post-COVID-19, IOSH is concerned about the appearance of an even more fragmented and virtual workplace. This creates new OSH challenges and a system is not yet in place to manage OSH in a virtual, gig, or platform work environment. IOSH is pleased to see the tremendous alignment and commitment across all of the key VZF stakeholders. The efforts in Asia and Africa to building strong national OSH systems are admirable. In conclusion, he stated that the VZF provides IOSH with the opportunity to fulfil its obligation to keep people safe and healthy in the workplace. He confirmed that IOAH intends to play a significant role in VZFs great efforts to make supply chains safer and healthier.

## Questions and Answers (Q&A)

The moderator noted the results of an online participants' poll during the Forum: the survey respondents expressed strong support for using the VZF collective action model to address OSH issues highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly citing its ability to bring together national and global actors in a collective response, and by using OSH as an entry point to address other labour issues generated during the pandemic.

In final remarks, **Dr Ralf Franke** emphasized the importance of MNEs vetting their entire supply chain and providing capacity building opportunities for partners who need to improve OSH compliance.

**Kris de Meester** suggested that OSH management systems perhaps could be delivered through a system of third party contractors as a means of addressing capacity deficits. This model has proven effective in several European countries.

**Ms Longley** stressed the need for workers and companies to collectively address OSH; subcontracting responsibilities is not the answer, it only outsources the problem.

**DDG Newton** responded that the VZFs focus on building country-level solutions to OSH deficits is making a positive difference. The ILO recognizes the issue of low OSH capacity and informality, and fully supports the right of freedom of association as a means to enable progress. The ILO is actively supporting VZFs efforts to become a truly global initiative.

**Ms Anousheh Karvar** commented that the pandemic has placed a responsibility on all stakeholders to collaborate and work harder

to improve OSH to all workers and workplaces around the world, thereby ensuring that their work is decent. The VZF is a means of fighting double standards, and it promotes social dialogue at all levels. There needs to be greater visibility into the operations of GSCs, and stronger enforcement. She confirmed France's full commitment to the VZF for the coming years as a donor (France is funding a VZF project in the construction sector in Madagascar) as well as in the governance and promotion of the Fund. She called upon all participants to jointly consider how to increase the impact of VZF; how to involve more international companies and to increase contributions to the VZF. She emphasized that there is an important opportunity to enhance VZFs impact by bringing more international companies on board. She concluded that all stakeholders have the chance to create good work; to create healthy and safe environments; and to help people to work better. This is both a humanitarian and a business imperative.

**Mr O'Neill** closed by expressing strong support for effort to make OSH a fundamental right of work, and was joined in this call by **Ms Longley**, who urged stronger regulation of OSH in the agricultural sector. Continued VZF work in agriculture is much welcomed.



## Closing Remarks

The high-level forum was closed by **Ms Vera Paquete-Perdigao**, Director of the ILO Governance and Tripartism Department. She stressed that the VZF collective action model has proven its worth. From the earliest stage, all projects are discussed among the stakeholders in a tripartite matter, ensuring that the work of the Fund does is relevant to all. Although the Fund is now operational in eight countries, there is a long road ahead. She closed the Forum by calling on all VZF partners to work collectively to address the OSH deficits that impact all workers worldwide.

# Some important takeaways from the Vision Zero Fund High-Level Forum 2021

1. There is overwhelming agreement amongst all the participants – key stakeholders in the global OSH arena – of the

**importance of OSH and the critical need to improve OSH in global supply chains.** It is an issue that lends itself to collaboration and cooperation under the auspices of the Fund's collective action model.

*"What is encouraging about this conversation is the high level of common purpose that we heard from government, employers and workers. We are all aiming at the same result."*

*— Guy Ryder, Director General, ILO*

*"There is a lot more that unites us than divides us on the question of occupational health and safety."*

*— Paapa Kwasi Danquah, Legal Officer, ITU*



2. Support was expressed for the Fund's collective action approach, which brings all relevant stakeholders together to **develop and implement joint solutions to reduce severe or fatal work accidents, injuries, or diseases in global supply chains.** Participants widely acknowledged that all parties, including buyers, need to be directly involved in supporting global improvements in OSH; it cannot be the sole responsibility of poorly-resourced host governments. VZF project solutions, developed with proven methodologies and the active participation of local actors, reflect national context and available resources and attract the commitment and support of those with the greatest stake in a successful outcome.

*"We must continue to bring together global companies, national level suppliers, governments, workers and trade unions, civil society and development agencies to design joint solutions. The VZF's approach holds great promise for better, safer and more sustainable future for those working in global supply chains."*

*— Martha Newton, ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy*



3. Many Forum participants referenced the **VZF's agile and prompt response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, which allowed many businesses to continue to operate safely.

"Now during the pandemic the Vision Zero Fund has also proven its ability to react fast. For example, it has quickly implemented preventive and mitigating Covid-19 measures in the textile sector in seven countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Madagascar, and Vietnam."

— Hubertus Heil, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany



4. Strong agreement was also voiced by all participants for the VZF to **increase project funding, attract new donors, and to expand to new countries, regions and sectors**. A broad consensus was also reached that the ILO should strengthen its OSH programming across the board.

"Five years ago, the G7 heads of state and governments sent an urgent message to companies in their countries to implement due diligence in their supply chains. Establishing the Vision Zero Fund was a very important step to improve OSH in GSC's. The Fund offers important support for companies at the beginning of their supply chains. It is my hope that even more companies will join the Vision Zero Fund."

— Hubertus Heil, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

5. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of improving OSH in GSCs. Sustainable success requires a broad range of interventions and responses including capacity building, policy reform, enhanced compliance, sectoral projects, TVET training, better OSH data, strategic allocation of resources, and carefully scoped project interventions using the ILO's tripartite approach and a broad range of assessment and scoping tools. Although many OSH initiatives are necessarily top-down (data enhancement, policy reform, stronger enforcement and compliance) **sustainable OSH reform requires early and intensive stakeholder involvement, meaningful social dialogue, and the involvement and support of a broad segment of civil society**.



"We have begun to see evidence of important gains at workplace level in VZF project countries ... However, we also know that these gains will not be sustained unless public frameworks in the countries are strengthened. For improvements at workplace level to 'stick', one needs strong institutions and an effective regulatory framework that includes good laws and robust enforcement of those laws. That is why a significant portion of the Vision Zero Fund's work is focused on strengthening legal and policy frameworks and national institutions."

— Ockert Dupper, VZF Global Programme Manager

6. National OSH laws are not consistently enforced. Many governments have ratified OSH conventions and enacted stronger labour laws, but few have the resources or capacity to ensure widespread implementation. There is little assurance of a level playing field for the businesses in the sector. **VZF, with an approach that stresses strengthening national institutions and national OSH policy, can contribute to the creation of such a level playing field.**



"There is of course due diligence and the engagement that companies and global players need to engage in with seriousness ... But do not forget that this is a co-responsible engagement ... It will be very limited to just push on this area if at the same time we do not move on the need to strengthen capacities and engage politically at the local level on the need to strengthen institutions ... That is for me the way forward."

— Roberto Suarez-Santos, Secretary-General, IOE

7. The Vision Zero Fund can play an important role to help governments and social partners to **meet the requirements of the labour standards** incorporated in trade agreements and thereby promote economic development.

"US trade agreements also include language on cooperation between the parties on a broad range of labour and employment issues, including OSH ... The VZF has played a useful role in the context of trade with its collaborative and inclusive approach and in my view the programme has great potential to continue to make contributions in this area."

— Mark Mittelhauser, Associate Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs, US Dept. of Labor



"Trade agreements such as the Vietnam–EU Free Trade Agreement and Australia–ASEAN–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement include OSH in the labour standard provisions. Markets can provide the incentives or pull for improved OSH practices. Improved OSH practices, on the other hand, can contribute to laying the groundwork for gainful participation in global supply chains."

— Marian Boquiren, Value Chain Specialist

8. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a tragic reminder of the importance of safety and health at work. Stopping the pandemic in its tracks, and preparing for the next crisis, demands a renewed commitment to OSH, particularly in GSCs, which form the foundation of global trade. Forum discussions made it clear that VZF is well positioned to advance collective action for improved OSH in GSCs. **The Fund's core strategy to mobilize collective efforts by key stakeholders to tackle the root causes of workplace accidents, injuries, and diseases in GSCs** has shown significant impact and should be further nurtured and strengthened.



"I really must congratulate that VZF that it includes everyone. It reaches out actively to the social partners, to companies and to governments ... I really would like to call on everyone to make the Vision Zero Fund a success. The Fund takes the right approach by organizing collective action to have the right local approach and now we really need to make it work ... To engage with the VZF is the right way to address the OSH risks that we see in so many countries."

— Matthias Thorns, Deputy Secretary-General, IOE

### KEY RESULTS: POST EVENT SURVEY

Hundreds of participants completed the post event survey. Key results included:

**95%** of the respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction (63% very satisfied/extremely satisfied and 32% satisfied) with the event in general. This also reflected in the qualitative responses received. The event was appreciated for being ‘well organised’, inclusive, informative, productive and easy to follow because of interpretation features.

**95% to 98%** respondents rated all the sessions as interesting to extremely interesting. Diversity of opinion, collective commitment, knowing better about the VZF, on-the-fly polls, relevance of the themes, sharing of countries’ real experiences, and knowledgeable speakers were the attributes that participant liked the most.

**For 75%** of respondents, this was the first VZF event that they had participated in. Almost all respondents (99%) indicated that they would potentially attend future VZF events.





**ANNEX 1**  
**Agenda**

# Day 1

23 February 2021

12h00–15h30 CET

## HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY 1

### Occupational safety and health in global supply chains in times of COVID-19

12h00–13h30 CET | *English, French, Spanish*

#### SPEAKERS

**Guy Ryder**

Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Hubertus Heil**

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

**Ergogie Tesfaye**

Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**Roberto Suárez Santos**

Secretary-General, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

**Owen Tudor**

Deputy General-Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

#### MODERATOR

**Conny Czymoch**

Independent international moderator and journalist

## BREAK

13h30–14h00 CET

## WORKSHOP 1

### Vision Zero Fund – achievements, challenges, and future plans

14h00–15h30 CET | *English, French, Spanish*

#### SPEAKERS

**Jerson Razafimanantsoa**

Director General of Labour and Social Laws, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Civil Service and Social Laws, Madagascar

**Gustavo Solorzano**

Manager of legal affairs, Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP)

**Maura Patricia Hernandez Tapia**

Programme Coordinator, Confederation of Workers of Mexico (CTM)

**Mark Mittelhauser**

Associate Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs, U.S. Department of Labour

**Ockert Dupper**

Global Programme Manager, VZF, ILO

#### MODERATOR

**Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard**

Director, Department of Partnerships and Field Support, ILO

# Day 2

24 February 2021

9h30–18h30 CET

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION 1

### How can improved safety and health facilitate access to global supply chains? The VZF experience in Asia

09h30-11h00 CET | *English*

#### SPEAKERS

**Tran Thi Lan Anh**

Deputy Secretary General of VCCI Vietnam

**Sengchanh Khammountha**

Vice President Lao Coffee Association

**Thai Quynh Mai Dung**

Director, International Department, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)

**Shruti Patidar**

Regional Land and Freedom Officer, IUF Asia and Pacific

**Marian Boquiren**

Value Chain Development Specialist

**Mariana Infante**

Chief Technical Advisor, VZF Myanmar, ILO

**Kallene Ryan**

Independent researcher

**Kristina Kurths**

Chief Technical Advisor, VZF Laos and Vietnam, ILO

#### MODERATOR

**Rene Robert**

Specialist in Labour Administration and Labour Inspection, ILO Decent Work Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific

## BREAK 1

11h00–12h00 CET

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION 2

### Systematic approach to strengthen OSH institutions for sustained improvements in OSH practices: VZF experiences from the garment sector in Africa

12h00-13h30 CET | *English, French*

#### SPEAKERS

**Hanitra Fitiavana Razakaboana**

Regional Director of Labor, Employment, Public Service and Social Laws Analamanga, Madagascar

**Beatrice Chan**

Vice-president of GEFP and Member of Grouping of Companies of Madagascar (GEM)

**Botoudi Remi Henri**

National Coordinator of CTM, Madagascar

**Fikadu Gebru**

Director Harmonious Industrial Relation Directorate, Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia

**Dawit Moges**

Vice-President, Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federations

**Angessom Yohannes**

President, Industrial Federation of Ethiopian Textile, Leather and Garment Worker Trade Union

#### MODERATORS

**Ana Catalina Ramirez, Frédéric Laisné-Auer and Evans Lwanga**

ILO

## BREAK 2

13h30–17h00 CET

### REGIONAL DISCUSSION 3

## Challenges and opportunities for improving workers' OSH in the coffee global supply chain: The experience of Colombia, Honduras and Mexico

17h00-18h30 CET | *English, Spanish*

#### SPEAKERS

*Opening remarks:* **Sebastian Zaleski**

Council, Economic and Trade Division, European Union  
Delegation to Mexico

**Ligia Stella Chaves Ortiz**

Vice Minister of Labour Relations, Ministry of Labour,  
Colombia

**Santiago Arguello**

Director of the Promotion of Agriculture Unit, Secretary  
of Agriculture, Mexico

**Ligia Borrero Retrepo**

Legal Director, National Federation of Coffee Growers  
of Colombia

**José Luis Barradas**

Familia Rogers, México

**José Julio Espinoza**

National Peasant Confederation, México

**Joel Almendares**

Unitary Central of Workers Honduras

**Pilar Cariño**

Researcher and global supply chain specialist

**Carlos Ariel García**

Center for Regional Coffee Growers and Business Studies  
(CRECE)

*Closing remarks:* **Renato Bignami**

OSH Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Latin America  
and the Caribbean

#### MODERATOR

**Rodrigo Mogrovejo**

Chief Technical Advisor, VZF, ILO

# Day 3

25 February 2021

12h00–15h30 CET

## WORKSHOP 2

### Improving occupational safety and health in global supply chains

12h00-13h30 CET | *English, French, Spanish*

#### SPEAKERS

**Antonio Cammarota**

Principal Administrator, DG EMPL/B3, European Commission

**Omar Estefan**

Director General for Social Welfare, Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico

**Matthias Thorns**

Deputy Secretary-General, IOE

**Sittichoke Huckuntod**

Director, Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Nike

**Paapi Kwasi Danquah**

Legal Officer, ITUC

**Glen Mpufane**

Director of Mining, Diamond, Gem, Ornament and Jewellery Processing, IndustriALL

#### MODERATOR

**Githa Roelans**

Head, Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit, ILO

## BREAK

13h30–14h00 CET

## HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY 2

### Collective action for safe and healthy supply chains: How can we collectively improve OSH in GSCs under the auspices of the VZF over the next 3-5 years?

14h00–15h30 CET | *English, French, Spanish*

#### SPEAKERS

**Martha Newton**

Deputy Director-General for Policy, ILO

**Anousheh Karvar**

Delegate of the French Government to the ILO's Governing Body/Labour & Employment Task Officer to the G7 and G20

**Ralf Franke**

Global Head of EHS, Siemens

**Kris de Meester**

Senior Adviser, Federation of Enterprises, Belgium

**Rory O'Neill**

Occupational Health and Safety Adviser, ITUC

**Sue Longley**

General Secretary, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

**Alan Stevens**

Director of Strategic Engagement, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

#### MODERATOR

**Joaquim Pintado-Nunes**

Chief, Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch, ILO

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Vera Paquete-Perdigao**

Director, Governance and Tripartism Department, ILO

*For more information about these speakers, download their bios [here](#).*

**ANNEX 2**

# **Year in Review**



International  
Labour  
Organization

SAFETY  
+ HEALTH  
FOR ALL

VISION ZERO FUND

# High Level Forum



# Year in Review

Since emerging as a global crisis in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound impacts everywhere. It has also impacted the work of the Vision Zero Fund and that of our global partners.

Nevertheless, we were able to continue to mobilize the best ideas and the most committed partners – globally and locally – to activate smarter solutions to the challenge of worker safety and health.

OCTOBER 2019 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2020

# Key Accomplishments



*Above: Training material validation with project partners in Lao PDR, Nov. 2019*

*Left: Ergonomically designed sorting table in Myanmar, Oct. 2019*

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

We contributed to numerous high-level events – including a briefing to G20 members – attended by nearly 1,200 policymakers and stakeholders, and published over 100 tools and knowledge products on safety and health in global supply chains. The G20 Labour and Employment Ministers welcomed us as an important instrument to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic in global supply chains, and to better prepare for future public emergencies, and ILO's Governing Body recognised us as one of the “most prominent” programmes in global supply chains that “has helped improve compliance with core ILO standards and national legislation, while also increasing the competitiveness of enterprises.”

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

We reallocated funding and secured new funding to provide technical and financial resources to our partners, including a COVID-19 checklist for SMES (translated into nine languages); a guide for preventing and mitigating COVID-19 in agriculture, which was widely disseminated and implemented by constituents in Latin America, Asia and Europe; and a COVID-19 rapid needs assessment tool for developing response plans. We also expanded our reach by partnering with the ILO-IFC Better Work programme to implement COVID-19 relief measures in the garment supply chain in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

### KEY RESULTS SINCE 2016

5.6 million workers benefited (directly and indirectly)

8 countries on 3 continents impacted

100+ tools and knowledge products developed in over 10 languages

10 development partners

USD 28 million invested in improving OSH in GSCs



## IN ETHIOPIA

▶ **40,593** garment workers benefited from improved knowledge and advice on safety and health

In collaboration with the Better Work Programme, we participated in 22 unannounced assessments and 121 advisory visits to garment factories, resulting in 22 factory improvement plans.

- We provided support to labour inspectors to enforce compliance with laws and regulations on COVID-19 and supported awareness-raising campaigns.
- We conducted disinfection training for 86 cleaning crews in factories that cover a total of 331,494 m<sup>2</sup> of production floor.
- We assisted the labour inspectorate to develop strategic compliance plans to achieve improved compliance outcomes despite limited financial and human resources.
- 1200+ workers, line supervisors, managers and operators received training on OSH, workplace cooperation, and rights and responsibilities, among others.

## IN LAO PDR

▶ **100%** of project pilot factories established bipartite workplace OSH committees  
All 10 project pilot factories established bipartite OSH committee to facilitate social dialogue on safety and health

- 80 trained farmers in the project pilot villages implemented one or more OSH workplace improvement measure
- We assisted the Lao Social Security Organisation (LSSO) in reforming its inspection practices, including developing new guidelines and establishing a social security inspection task team.
- We increased the knowledge of labour inspectors on OSH hazards and risks in the garment and agriculture sectors, provided targeted training on OSH inspection skills, and provided technical input on a national OSH Decree

## IN MEXICO

▶ **5** virtual courses developed to introduce OSH protocols

These protocols with an emphasis on COVID-19 were developed in coordination with the Mexican Association of the coffee production chain and the National Association of Coffee Industries.

- We produced a COVID-19 prevention and mitigation guide for the agricultural sector that was adopted by the Government. Video and radio spots were produced to ensure that the messages reached workers in the field.

## IN HONDURAS

▶ **A virtual OSH course delivered to 47** organizations, companies, & cooperatives

In coordination with the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) and with the support of the Central American Technological University, we developed a virtual course on OSH and COVID-19, with a focus on the agriculture and coffee sectors. The course will be promoted in other countries and adapted to other sectors.

- In coordination with COHEP and the Honduran Coffee Institute, we developed a practical guide for preventing and mitigating COVID-19 in agriculture and in the coffee value chain. The guide informed the development of national COVID-19 protocols in a number of agricultural sub-sectors.

## IN COLOMBIA

▶ **165** agricultural technicians, coffee growers & exporters participated in a course on the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19

With the support of the Colombian Safety Council, we developed a virtual course on the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19. To promote south-south learning, the course was also delivered to 176 members of Peru's National Labour Inspectorate.

- We published a study on perceptions of and good practices on occupational accidents and illnesses in the Colombian coffee sector.

## IN MADAGASCAR

▶ **245** labour inspectors and controllers trained

An OSH training curriculum developed by the ILO was delivered to a 12-person labour inspectors' task force, who in turn used a training-of-trainer approach to train 245 of their colleagues.

- We supported inspection visits to 687 businesses with more than 19,000 workers to help improve safety and hygiene measures.
- Labour inspectors and the National Social Security Fund through a joint "social protection task force" visited garment factories encompassing 558 employers and 12,172 workers.
- We published a comprehensive assessment of drivers and constraints for OSH improvements in the global textile supply chain from Madagascar.
- With our support, employers registered 1,335 seasonal workers in the lychee supply chain with local inter-enterprise medical services, a significant increase over the previous year.

## IN MYANMAR

▶ **198,000** workers benefit from new streamlined employment injury insurance procedures

We developed and piloted a set of streamlined procedures for submission of employment injury claims, which resulted in a 50% reduction in processing time, and a significant reduction in the number of steps and documents required to submit claims for occupational accidents and injuries. The new streamlined procedures were piloted in two townships and benefitted 198,000 workers, 141,000 of whom are garment workers. It is expected to be rolled out nationwide in 2021.

- We worked with numerous partners on a campaign focused on ensuring that workers could return safely to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. By late 2020, the campaign page had been visited 4 million times. The campaign also produced an animated music video by popular Myanmar singer Mi Sandi that reached an additional 1.3 million people and was broadcast numerous times on the national state television channel.
- We recruited 74 master trainers (54% women) from several trade unions to train 800 garment workers on COVID-19.
- We supported the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department (FGLLID) in drafting enabling regulations for the new OSH Law.

Videos on the highlights of the discussions that took place at the **HLF** are [available here.](#)



# VISION ZERO FUND

## Vision Zero Fund

Labour Administration,  
Labour Inspection and  
Occupational Safety and  
Health Branch

## International Labour Organization

Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
[ilo.org/vzf](http://ilo.org/vzf)  
[vzf@ilo.org](mailto:vzf@ilo.org)

## Current and Past Donors



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