CPTPP opportunities - challenges for workers and Trade Union of Vietnam

After Australia became the sixth country to ratify the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on October 31, 2018, the agreement will become effective at the end of December 2018. The Vietnamese National Assembly also approved the CPTPP in November 2018.

The CPTPP was signed with the participation of 11 countries: Vietnam, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru and Singapore. The CPTPP basically retains the contents of the old TPP Agreement but allows member countries to postpone some obligations to ensure a balance in the new context with the high quality of the Agreement. Therefore, the nature and quality of the Agreement are expressed through two additional words, Comprehensive and Progressive, which are the common goals for the inclusiveness of the TPP Agreement.

The CPTPP does not have the United States, but the group of participating countries accounts for about 13% of global GDP. Joining in this Agreement, Vietnam can promote the export of goods and attract foreign investment in countries such as Japan, Australia, Canada and Mexico as important trade and investment partners. Participation in this agreement creates competition with an open business and investment environment and thereby will also bring a positive momentum to development. According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Vietnam's GDP will increase by about 1.32%, exports will increase by 4%.

(Picture)

*Member states participating in CPTPP*

According to the assessment, Vietnam will receive many benefits when participating in CPTPP. The opportunity is unlimited, but to take advantage of the opportunity requires the Government and Vietnamese businesses themselves to make great efforts. When the CPTPP is implemented, Vietnamese employees, Trade Union organizations will be strongly impacted on employment, organizational model and operation.
Labor rights was one of the main issues in the final round of CPTPP negotiation before signing. The new generation of free trade agreement (FTA) is characterized by a strong emphasis on labor rights, as well as environmental sustainability, helping workers and businesses to benefit from fair economic benefits. The CPTPP requires all participating countries to adopt and maintain the rights set forth in the International Labor Organization's 1998 Declaration of the ILO in laws, institutions and practices, all states ILO members, including Vietnam, must respect these rights. These are considered to be recognized worldwide in modern society. However, Vietnam has not yet ratified three basic conventions (Conventions 87, 98 and 105) related to freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and the elimination of forced labor. In order to achieve this, it is required Vietnam to develop and improve the legal framework and labor relations system, serving the needs of workers, businesses and society, towards political stability and commonwealth.

With a better legal system and investment environment, Vietnamese workers will have more job opportunities, career options, better working conditions, income and living standards, protection and equality with workers of other countries. To take advantage of the opportunities that CPTPP brings, Vietnam's workforce needs to be trained to gain vocational skills and information technology, especially when it comes to Industry 4.0. If they do not meet the requirements, the risk of unemployed, unemployed workers is very large, can always come to individuals, groups of people, even businesses.

Joining the CPTPP is an acceptance that in the near future, the Vietnamese Trade Union will have to compete with labor representative organizations, an unprecedented job. Up to now, Vietnam Trade Union is the only organization representing workers, performing three functions of trade union: representing, protecting workers; take part in management and supervision; educating and educating laborers and taking part in implementing political tasks of the country, industries and enterprises. Presenting at the National Assembly, Mr. Ngo Duy Hieu, Vice President of the VGCL said, "The Vietnamese Trade Union is ready to accept and overcome challenges, considering it an opportunity for strong innovation in organization and operation. of your organization ."

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unions will have difficulty in establishing union locals and developing union members, the resources to ensure their activities will be shared and reduced, the trade union operating environment will also change drastically due to relations. Labor is complicated. The current Vietnamese trade union has many advantages but there are also many inadequacies in the organizational model, administrative activities, pure and superficial movement organization, slow to adapt to the new situation. When an employee representative organization is established at the grassroots with strange claims, it may initially attract workers to join or even leave the old organization (Vietnam Trade Union) to join. This new organization. This is the risk of losing union members and developing new union members of Vietnam Trade Union in the coming time.

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The union local currently, in addition to implementing the resolutions and plans of the higher levels, must also organize the activities of localities and businesses, many of which are not in the functions and duties of the union. In fact, most union locals focus only on cultural, artistic, physical training and sports activities, visiting, joyful, superficial movements and political activities under the direction of their superiors. While operating a market economy, complex labor relations desperately need a representative trade union to protect workers in the field of law, dispute resolution, negotiation and mediation, the role of union locals have a lot of restrictions. When an employee representative organization is established, focusing only on the purpose, the main task is to protect workers, organize labor-related care activities, do not participate in political movements, then it is easy to attract workers, easy to be supported by workers. Without reforming the content of the union's operation method at the grassroots level, the Vietnamese Trade Union will not be joined and supported by workers right from the grassroots level. What should be done for trade union activities focusing on the representative to protect the rights of workers? Trade unions are workers' organizations and not interfered by employers? Through trade unions, workers express their will and aspirations through collective bargaining and dialogue, promoting stable development for businesses and society. On the other hand, trade unions must struggle to expose the nature of labor representative organizations established not for the purpose of protecting workers but for political motives, sabotage of the country or employers' manipulation. , sabotage trade unions, affecting the interests of businesses and workers.

A part of the trade union cadres is still heavy in the idea of subsidy, weak, stagnant and conservative education, which is inconsistent with the market economy and the development of science and technology. The limitations of the cadre work will be the challenges when the competition comes, the workers choose their own "leader". Right now, strong, qualified and prestigious cadres need to join trade union leaders, especially at grassroots level.
Participation in CPTPP is an indispensable trend for Vietnam to integrate and develop society and economy. Vietnamese trade unions are willing to accept impacts, difficulties and challenges with trade unions for the greater and more benefits of the nation and the nation.