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| **First online platform for exhibitions to be launched in VN**  HCMC – The HAWA Online Platform for Exhibition (HOPE), which will connect Vietnamese wood processing and furniture firms with international and local buyers, will officially launch on August 7 in HCMC.  Developed by Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of HCMC (HAWA), HOPE features vivid images of 360-degree showrooms, factories and workshops, a 3D product catalogue, social apps to enable 24/7 interaction between exhibitors and visitors, digital marketing, life events, and others.  HOPE will display thousands of products from hundreds of manufacturers and exporters that are verified by HAWA so that buyers can have peace of mind when they experience, search and select their potential suppliers business community, said HAWA Deputy Chairman Nguyen Chanh Phuong.  With the message “Virtual Gateway to Vietnam Furniture Industry”, HOPE is an effective channel to help international buyers find products and suppliers during a time when many trade fairs and exhibitions have been delayed or cancelled due to COVID-19, he said.  HOPE’s mission is to help place Vietnam’s wood and furniture industry among the top in the world, he added.  Nguyen Thanh Phong, deputy chairman of HAWA, said: “Previously, furniture firms mainly sought orders through fairs and exhibitions. However, from the beginning of 2020 until now, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, finding customers and direct orders has been very difficult. In this context, many businesses in the wood and furniture industry have stepped up their **diversification** of marketing and sales channels to maintain their operations.”  “The establishment of HOPE will contribute to perfecting trade promotion channels, giving member businesses and shoppers a **seamless** and fast connection.”  Dinh Thi Huong Nga, CEO of Huong Nga Fine Arts, one of the first companies to display products and showroom on HOPE, said that within one month of introducing her company’s showroom on HOPE to customers, the company received two contracts, with one order from an long-time customer and another from a new customer.  “Shopper, especially those who want to buy wood and handicraft products, often had to come to an exhibition or showroom to see, touch and study a company and its products before deciding to place an order. During the pandemic period, although customers have demands and the company often contacted customers, no order was signed. The vivid image technology and detailed information about products and factories on HOPE has created great confidence for customers to decide to place an order,” she said.  Tran Viet Huan, deputy chairman of CIO Vietnam, said the HOPE platform not only helps local producers connect with international buyers amid the pandemic, but also meets changes in marketing and trading in the line with the trends of digital transformation and use of technologies to boost sales.  There are 50 virtual showrooms of Vietnamese furniture manufacturers and exporters on [*http://hopefairs.com*](http://hopefairs.com)*,* according to Phuong. The number is expected to be about 100 showrooms by the year-end. | **Diversification:** đa dạng hóa.  **Seamless/**seem-lis: smoothy continuous, liền mạch. |