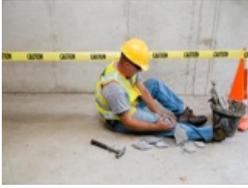


## THIRTEEN WORKPLACE FATALITIES PER DAY – AN AVOIDABLE TOLL



A report issued by the AFL-CIO on Wednesday, reported that 13 US workers, on an average were killed on the job each day and approximately 50,000 died from diseases picked up during work in 2010. The report expresses concern about the sudden increase in the, normally arrested downward trend that has held for the last four decades. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said "too many women and men in this country and around the world continue to be hurt or killed on the job. Bill Kojola, an industrial hygienist with the AFL-CIO's safety and health department said, "We're actually trending upward, which is not a good sign. Particularly in an economy when the hours of work are down, especially in construction. If construction was running full bore, it's likely the numbers would be higher." The AFL-CIO, the biggest U.S. federation of labor unions, analyzed that, even though the number of workplace deaths, have been more or less similar and have actually shown a downward trend over the last 40 years, workers still get injured, killed or sick on the job, simply because safety enforcements are poor, regulatory action by government is not adequate, safety precautions are either not in place and its enforcement is not monitored satisfactorily. The report says that, "the job safety laws need to be strengthened. The nation must renew the commitment to protect workers from injury, disease and death and make this a high priority." The report shows that Latino workers have a fatality at the workplace rate that is 8 percent higher than all other workers. Of the 707 Latino deaths in 2010, 60 percent of them were migrants. The high rate of migrant deaths is attributed to the type of hazardous work that Latino workers do and their reluctance, for fear of adverse employer repercussion, to report workplace worker abuses. The Report praises President Barack Obama and his team, saying that the White House has tried to introduce and implement worthy rules inspite of stiff opposition from opposition parties. However, it alleges that anti-regulatory forces have used their influence to ensure that their interests are safeguarded and White House's Office of Management and Budget, the agency that oversees rulemaking, has kept some of the safety rules in abeyance, bowing to pressure from them. To validate their allegation, the report cites the rule concerning use of crystalline silica, a hazardous, inhalable dust found in sand and granite that has proven to cause respiratory disease in construction workers. In spite of 15 years of efforts regulators have failed to set a standard to limit workers' exposure to the dust. White House is sitting on a proposal for over a year, which if passed could legislate safety regulations that can save precious lives, some of whom are sole bread earners for their families. Kojola said, there's a real impact on workers if we don't promulgate rules like silica in a timely fashion. These are workers' lives that could have been saved." The reports laments that the number of workplace inspectors to monitor and investigate and enforce is "woefully inadequate." A total of 2,178 inspectors are expected to cover more than 8 million workplaces. The federal government, it noted, has the "resources to inspect each American workplace once every 131 years."