

## 10-05-2013 Labor enforcement reforms needed in wake of Paranaque construction accident

Press Release

October 5, 2013

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PM lambasted employers for cutting corners in occupational safety in order to raise profits and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for the lax implementation of labor and safety standards. "While capitalists were scrimping on protection for workers and DOLE was sleeping on its job of enforcement, workers are dying in the workplace," Fortaleza elaborated.

Ricardo "Boy" Marcaida, a construction worker who is acting president of the Samahan ng Manggagawa sa Komunidad (SMK) in Malabon, averred that "Accidents are not acts of divine providence that can be dismissed as unavoidable. Instead accidents are the result of unsafe acts and therefore preventable by strict enforcement of occupational safety and health and labor standards." SMK is a legitimate labor organization registered with the DOLE which is affiliated to PM.

"Under the regime of the DOLE's self-assessment program, the number of labor inspectors have shrunk from around 240 to less than 200 and the number of establishments inspected plummeted from 60,000 in 2003 to just 6,000 in 2010. Self-assessment means that the government is asking the wolf to guard the sheep. No wonder the sheep get slaughtered," Marcaida criticized.

He recommended that “We propose that the DOLE deputize labor leaders as labor inspectors. In so doing the number of inspectors and inspections can be increase several fold overnight, enforcement can be strengthened immediately, and workers lives and limbs can be saved.”

Fortaleza added that “The DOLE has again been caught sleeping on the job. DOLE must review contractors and their principals for compliance not just with safety regulations but labor standards such as payment of minimum wages and benefits, observance of working hours and remittance of social security among others. Construction workers are among the most overworked yet underpaid of employees since they are generally unorganized.” ###

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