

2 MILLION WANT MORE

MORE than two million workers are expected to unite to press for salary rises in the coming year.

The motivator of this rare action, the Young Workers Confederation, will send out leaflets next week calling for such a move in the industrial and commercial sectors.

A confederation spokesman said yesterday salary increments of a greater level were necessary since the income of most workers did not match the soaring cost of living.

He said that the average increment for most workers earlier this year was below what he called a "reasonable level" as Hongkong was then in the throes of an economic recession.

The hardship of workers was augmented by the recent weakening of the Hongkong

dollar, which had led to the rocketing prices of most daily necessities, he said.

"The actual income of the workers is deteriorating and many of them cannot make ends meet with their present salaries," he said.

"Since Hongkong's economy is recovering at a considerable speed now, it is time to make up for the workers' loss," he said.

The spokesman said the confederation would send out teams to the industrial and commercial areas later this month to call on workers to join the action.

They will distribute leaflets calling on the workers to press for a greater salary increment through their labour unions.

Those who are not members of any union will be urged to set up employees' associations to press for their demands.

"But the way in which they

are going to make their demands will be left for them to decide," he said.

The move by the Young Workers Confederation is expected to gain support from other labour organisations.

The Director of the Christian Industrial Committee, Lau Chin-shek, agreed that the workers need a better wage rise.

He said the CIC will contact the confederation to see if a joint operation could put more pressure on employees.

Meanwhile, the confederation has conducted a survey on the electronics industry, which was in a better situation even during the economic recession.

However, the survey found the electronics workers only got an average 10 percent increment last year.

The spokesman said this level was far below the expected 13 percent inflation rate for this year.