

Workers in Southeast Asia get better deal

MIGRANT workers in the Southeast Asian region can look forward to higher wages and better policies for bringing in their families to their host countries with the signing of the Declaration on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers by the ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"There is a very general statement on the need to raise the wages of migrant workers in keeping with our goal of giving them more protection and benefits," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for migrant workers affairs Esteban Conejos said in a chance interview at the Palace.

Conejos said the heads of state of the 10 member-countries of Asean will adopt the declaration during the two-day Leaders' Summit in Cebu over the weekend. A draft copy of the declaration obtained by **Standard Today** showed that at least seven obligations have been spelled out for the receiving countries.

These include the establishment of non-discriminatory practices on employment, providing legal and judicial services to migrant workers being tried for a local offense, and granting the right to consular notification and access to workers in distress. **Joyce Pangco Pañares**