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## **Honduras: Business Leaders Concerned Over Prospects Of Economic Integration**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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According to recent statements by Carlos Avila, director of the Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP), the Honduran economy is ill-prepared in comparison to its Central American neighbors for the regional economic integration process. The COHEP leader asserted that the only way Honduras will be able to survive regional integration is to launch a thorough industrial conversion program. Central American governments have agreed to gradually implement tariff reductions and other measures aimed at establishing a free trade zone in 1993. Avila said Honduran business leaders will convene a series of meetings over the next few weeks to devise a common conversion strategy. The COHEP spokesperson added that there are no concrete proposals on how to finance reconversion activities, nor is there consensus within the business community on which areas should be prioritized toward improving Honduran competitiveness. Currently, only about 3% of Honduran exports are destined for other Central American countries. Independent experts say by 1995, the proportion could increase to between 5 and 8%. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 10/19/91)

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