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# Nicaragua: Occupational Conversion Plan

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## **Nicaragua: Occupational Conversion Plan**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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On Dec. 6, Eduardo Robelo, director of the Occupational Conversion Plan, told reporters that about 20,000 public employees voluntarily resigned between March and November this year, as part of a fiscal spending reduction project. The voluntary retirement program was funded in part by the US Agency for International Development (AID). According to Robelo, program participants received severance pay and most were able to find work in the informal commerce and services sectors. The government estimates that 35% of the labor force is employed in the formal sector, and 50% in informal occupations. At present, Robelo said, public employees number about 60,000, compared to 70,000 in 1980. The unemployment rate is estimated at between 15 and 18%. At present, 25,000 construction workers, and about 70,000 agricultural laborers are unemployed. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 12/06/91)

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