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On Jan. 6, local newspapers published highlights of a report by the US Agency for International Development (AID) predicting increased social and economic tensions throughout the 1990s, result of unemployment and marginalization of the majority of the population. The report said government structural adjustment policies would not lead to short- nor medium-term reductions in unemployment or increased productivity. According to USAID, maquiladoras (assembly for export) represent the most effective job creation option. However, said the report, the existing labor code acts as a "disincentive" to foreign investment. Government statistics indicate that at least 15% of the work force is unemployed. The Panamanian Workers Central (Central de Trabajadores de la Republica de Panama-CTRP) claims real unemployment is nearly 40%. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 01/06/92)

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