

October 1988

# Leslie Manigat on Haitian Modernization and the Pursuit of Happiness (Dialogue #122)

Anthony P. Maingot

*Florida International University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/laccopsd>

---

## Recommended Citation

Maingot, Anthony P., "Leslie Manigat on Haitian Modernization and the Pursuit of Happiness (Dialogue #122)" (1988). *LACC Occasional papers series. Dialogues (1980 - 1994)*. 21.  
<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/laccopsd/21>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) Publications Network at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LACC Occasional papers series. Dialogues (1980 - 1994) by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [dcc@fiu.edu](mailto:dcc@fiu.edu).

**LESLIE MANIGAT ON HAITIAN MODERNIZACION  
AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

**An Interview by Anthony P. Maingot  
Florida International University**

**Dialogue #122  
October 1988**

**Published by the Latin American and Caribbean Center  
Florida International University  
Miami, Florida 33199**

**Editor: Richard Tardanico  
Editorial Assistant: Sofia A. Lopez**

## **PREFACE**

This interview took place in Port-au-Prince on March 19, 1988. An edited version appears in the fall 1988 issue of Hemisphere (1:1).

Richard Tardanico

Editor

Occasional Papers Series Dialogues

INTERVIEW: PRESIDENT LESLIE MANIGAT

MARCH 19, 1988

APM In your earlier scholarship you posited the idea of stages in Haitian history. What "stage" do you believe Haiti is in right now and what are the major characteristics of that stage?

LM Well, if I had time to answer that question fully I would have made a strong case about the turning point in which we are right now, because I think we are at the end of a model of society in Haiti. I think that the best way to understand our analysis of Haitian history and the evolution along stages is to get an inspiration from the book by Daniel Lerner on Turkey, "The Passing of the Traditional Society." It seems to me that the crisis that we are living now is the final crisis of the Haitian traditional society which came out from the Independence War and established itself after the assassination of Dessalines from 1806 to the Duvalier era. I should have said to follow the truth more strictly -- from the assassination of Dessalines to the U.S. occupation. This is so because the crisis was there at the time of the U.S. occupation, what happened was that there was an aborted attempt at modernization of Haiti by the Americans during the occupation. The old system remained without being

rennovated, changed, or modernized. So therefore, we have the last crisis now of the traditional society. That's the reason why the answer to that crisis is modernization. The problem is that what type of modernization?. What is interesting, is that when we speak of stages, as we have in previous scholarship, we are at the end of the traditional society, which is going into its final stage. Of course, this crisis will last because it began under the Duvalier, Francois the father, who gave a Fascistoid answer to that crisis. And, after that, his son Jean Claude give another answer: an attempt at Liberalization but within the context of an authoritarian regime led by the father. So it was a mixed, ambiguous response with finally an "opening up" of the country to outside forces but in disorder, what you might call, capitalisme sauvage under Duvalier the son, which finally explains Haiti today: the abandonment of Haitian sovereignty. The state is no longer functioning to satisfy the basic needs of the population but depends on help from abroad. Whether from governments or from international organizations this aid is substituting itself to the normal function of the state. That is the reason why you can have about three hundred non-government organizations taking care of the basic needs in Haiti and assuming responsibilities which should normally be the responsibilities of the state. It is evident therefore, that the answer given by Duvalier was not the correct one to modernize Haiti. That's the

reason why we are coming with our own answer to that crisis. Modernization for us means triple modernization, political modernization which is Democracy. This will take some time, but we are entering definitely in the process of the organization of Haiti, there is no doubt about it. That is the reason why I called the second of February the first day, of the year one of Democracy in Haiti. Second, economic modernization which means a type of integrated development with a strong participation of the population itself in building the new economic structures of the country. And, third, social modernization which means a more just society; we must fight against an unacceptable degree of social injustice in the traditional society; we must build a more equitable society. But while doing that in the economic and social field, we must preserve what we have called Haitian soul: Haitian cultural identity, Haitian basic cultural personality. That's the reason why I define Haiti, we have defined Haiti, as the country of joyful or cheerful misery. We have to fight misery; however, we must be very careful not to eliminate this capacity to smile at life, to be cheerful, to be joyfull. Let us say -- no matter how sad it may sound to say so-- to be happy within misery.

APM President Manigat, how do you perceive your relations with the following countries: the United States, the Dominican

Republic, the CARICOM countries, France, Cuba and I should have added, Venezuela with whom I understand you have already developed very close ties, such as bringing a Venezuela mission here (I understand there is going to be a joint Haitian-Venezuelan housing project). Let us take these six then, the U.S., Dominican Republic, CARICOM, France and Cuba.

LM With the U.S., it is very easy to define our relation. We are in the Caribbean area at the southern border of the United States. The United States is one of the two super powers of the world and there is a tradition of friendly relations in certain fields with Haiti since the independence of the two countries. So, therefore, we are interested in strengthening this friendship, this solidarity. There is no doubt about it, we want to be friends, friends of the American people, friends of the American democracy. This is absolutely certain. But, it is also true, again looking at history, that we have often been -- let us put the words like it is, because we will be frank in our definitions -- we have been also victims of a degree of dependence which constitutes a negation or a denial of national sovereignty. This has been the case in the political field, as well as in the economic field. So, therefore, there is a feeling in Haiti that dealing with the United States we must preserve our national interest; we must preserve our national dignity. So, therefore, that

means that we want to be friends, but like Carlos Fuentes said, not satellites. Are we considered as partners, however small we are. And, we want that in any dialogue with the United States. Since we consider it normal for Washington to defend and promote its own national interests, Washington must also consider that it is normal that we defend and promote our own national interests. So, therefore, the dialogue will be a dialogue between two partners, each defending its interests, its views and conceptions. We must reach an agreement based on these two points of view, which are not antagonistic, but are different because Haiti is different from the United States. That is the way we see the problem. We see the problem as an effort from Washington to understand Haiti as a partner. To understand the difference that Haiti represents, but at the same time to appreciate the capital of friendship that can be used because Washington has in Haiti a sole capital of friendship. But let me go further. Of course, we have been victims of an American occupation, there is no doubt about it and there is a sensitivity in Haiti about the hegemony of the United States. But let me speak with realism. As you know, we are going to be very pragmatic in the development of our diplomatic relations. What does Washington represent to Haiti? One, Washington is a big Western democracy. So, therefore, in the political field there is a strong affinity; strong political aspirations to



build a viable democracy in Haiti based on the political system of the United States which is a more traditional, classic democracy of the Western style. That's one. That means that we share some basic principles, we share some basic values in the field of freedom, liberty, human dignity and so on. Second, the Americans represent for us the biggest consumer market in the world and we are geographically close to that market. So, therefore, we are interested in developing relations, commercial relations with the United States. Then there is the trade aspect and that is the reason why, for instance, we are interested in the CBI. Third, America is the leading power in the field of high technology. Technology will probably be the leading variable to build the new society, to build the new civilization. Therefore, we are interested -- as every other nation in the world is. Soviet Russia, France -- in the technological development of the United States of America in order to get some benefit from it. Of course, we understand that U.S. high technology is not the one which is most convenient to our modest size and to our level of development. And yet, we have to benefit from the extraordinary technological development to modernize our country and insure a certain rank in the international arena. We must not miss again, as we did in the 19th century, the technical revolution, the present technical revolution of humanity. And fourth, the U.S. is one of the

richest countries in the world a center of financial resources and an important power within the world's financial organizations. So, therefore we are interested in this aspect, the financial aspect, because we need investments in Haiti just as China or Russia are looking everywhere. We need, therefore, to welcome American investments in Haiti. That is the reason why we are interested in developing good relations with Washington. But, again, we emphasize the fact that this must, in our opinion must meet an equivalent good will from Washington, an effort to understand Haiti as a small nation, and also an effort not to try to put Haiti on its knees because I think this will be counterproductive given Haitian history and Haitian pride.

APM In terms of the same question, could you briefly tell me something about your relations with the Dominican Republic, Cuba, the other Caribbean countries, and finally, Venezuela and France.

LM Well, let us define ourselves quite briefly but strongly: We are a Caribbean nation. We are the first Caribbean nation as such, politically speaking, and the new government wants to orient our effort, our own people, toward the content and the meaning of that definition of being a Caribbean nation. We want Haiti to be more associated with its neighbors in the Caribbean area. To play a more active role in the shaping of the Caribbean

future, to be accepted as an important actor in the collective effort towards Caribbean unity. So, therefore, our own orientation is clear, our own determination is clear, our own conviction is clear. When I was in Trinidad, it seemed to me that it was obvious to everybody that I was a Caribbean man and I will be in power as a Caribbean man. No doubt about it. Now, let us take the cases. The Dominican Republic. Many times I have made strong statements about the way we in Haiti see the future of relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. We have some famous historical examples. Germany and France had problems, difficulties, tensions, antagonisms, wars, but what happened? When DeGaulle and Adenauer decided to change the course of history, what happened was very significant and very well known. It was the starting point of a strong solidarity, a strong friendship, a strong axis of cooperation was built. Similarly, what we are seeking is a change in the dominant characteristics in the relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti in order to build a new era of cooperation between the two nations, the way that Adenauer and DeGaulle did. This is our will, this is the way we perceive our action toward the Dominican Republic. However, we must say that to be partners, there must be at least two, we therefore expect the same position, the same disposition on the other side of the border. What does that mean? It means that first there must be a change of

conceptions on the other part of the border. Because, if you conceive a new partner -- not its elite but its masses -- as being inferior in racial and cultural terms, it is difficult to accept fully this partner on an equal basis. So, therefore, there must be an effort to change the Dominican mentality, to change their traditional conceptions of the Haitian masses. Let us be clear, there is one thing which is not well perceived on the other part of the border, it is that Haiti might be poor in the economic and social field and the elites rich and opulent, but there is a popular culture in Haiti which is very rich, so when you perceive the masses as being cultural inferior, you don't know the masses, because it is in the Haitian masses that we are the most rich, diversified and extraordinary country. So, therefore, if you accept popular culture Haiti, is definitely not underdeveloped in the field of culture. Of course, we may have a high degree of illiteracy, but this is something different, because an illiterate may be the bearer of the rich culture and that's exactly what is happening in Haiti. So, therefore, I think that there must be a change in the conception of the Haitian masses, a recognition of the dignity of the Haitian masses. The humanism of Caribbean man -- which is the main characteristic of Haitian popular culture -- forces one to perceive Haiti as an equal partner.

But, I must add one thing. There is a possibility that

there is a new trend in the Dominican Republic, among the intellectuals, and even among the people themselves. I say this, because contrary of what I have just said, there are some good practices and traditions of friendship between the two people. I have also detected in some of the recent statements of the present Dominican government, a kind of disposition for that new type of relations. And, I, myself will add that since the present party in power in the Dominican Republic has adopted, at least officially, a Christian Democratic label, maybe in Christianity, with a strong message about the equal dignity of every human being, you will find the source of inspiration for this new conception and attitude in the Dominican Republic toward Haiti. So, therefore, this seems to be a positive circumstance, a positive factor to justify our optimism that from both parts, there are good dispositions toward a new era of cooperation.

APM What do you perceive your relations with the CARICOM countries to be?

Let us take the second case in the Caribbean, CARICOM. We certainly know, as has been written, that during the presidential campaign I was the only one to raise the problem of the English speaking Caribbean as our friends and brothers and to try to inject some Caribbean content in the list of issues in the campaign, for the future of Haiti. I believe I have been called by someone, the

"Caribbean man" among the candidates. That is so because I spent almost five years in the English speaking Caribbean and I traveled more than ten years in the area, I think that my determination is to take all possible initiatives to favor and bring to fruition a rapprochement and association with the English speaking Caribbean. There is no doubt about it. Our personal feelings, our will, are there; we want to have closer relations with our Caribbean brothers of the English speaking Commonwealth. But, the problem is that, this must correspond to some impulse, also, from CARICOM, from our Caribbean brothers. I ask myself. How can you have a man like Leslie Manigat in power -- with what I tried to do in the Caribbean, with the ideas that I have and positions I have taken -- and yet it is right at this moment that some reservations are expressed about Haiti or about the Haitian government? Questions which relate to the admission of Haiti, the acceptance of Haiti in the brotherly community that we called the Caribbean area? I don't understand myself, quite frankly, why a country like Barbados seems to have taken such a strong position when I have only friends in Barbados, among officials and among the population? I don't think they are correctly informed about what is happening in Haiti and what the position of the new government is. It is only now that we have a chance for democracy, now that we have preserved the chance for democracy in Haiti. Be assured that if it were not for our

solution, there would have had been chaos, civil war, a coup or a foreign intervention in Haiti . All of these alternatives would have been undemocratic or anti-democratic. So, therefore, is now that we are giving democracy a chance. I think that our democratic credentials are high because we have fought the Duvalier dictatorship for more than twenty years and we spent twenty-three years in exile with a death sentence by the former dictatorship. It seems to me, therefore, that there should be some inclination, some disposition to understand that it is now that we are really beginning a new era of democracy in Haiti and they should encourage that. Not only understand, but encourage and support a relation with our new government. I hope that there are only misinformed, because I don't think they are incapable of understanding the problems of starting a new process of democratization in our country. So, therefore, we are willing to cooperate, we are willing to have a good association with the CARICOM. We do not seek the admission of Haiti as a full member of CARICOM right now. This is not in the interest of Haiti, as is not in the interest of the CARICOM partners themselves. But, we do seek a gradually closer association which may lead later to a fuller integration. For the moment, then, gradual association, gradual adjustments of CARICOM one side and Haiti on the other, both making similar efforts toward Caribbean unity.

APM How do you perceive your relations with Cuba?

LM People must realize that in all the Caribbean area we are the closest neighbor of Cuba. They must also realize, that we and Cuba are only separated by the Windward passage. They must also realize that we have a Haitian colony in Cuba since the beginning of this century and that they maintain some kind of Haitian feelings, if not a total Haitian identity. People must also realize that every day we have radio transmissions from Havana in creole, that any Haitian peasant with a small transistor may listen to. So, therefore, Cuba has more of a presence in Haiti, than any other Caribbean island because of that vicinity. But now, there is something which is very important. Because of the political situation, because of the nature of the Cuban regime we have no official relations with Cuba. So, therefore, we have a strange situation in which there is a presence, but this presence is not formalized in diplomatic relations. Can we live with that? Of course, we can. Of course, there is no problem. An important fact about Haiti is we have no enemies. People may look at us negatively for one moment but when they know us better they will realize that they were wrong. We have absolutely no enemies. We are for peaceful and friendly relations with all. This is so partly because we are a small nation. So, therefore, our problem with Cuba is only a problem that, unfortunately, Cuba represent in the Caribbean the introduction of the



East-West conflict. Haiti does not want to be involved in the East-West conflict. We have all that we can handle with the North-South conflict. We do not wish to add to our present problems, our present complications. That's the reason why we don't think is a matter of priority for Haiti to resume diplomatic relations with Cuba. We have other priorities: to fight for economic development, to meet the basic needs of the population. Frankly speaking, someone who comes to Haiti and thinks that we should have an obsession with the resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba, does not understand the country. They don't understand the geopolitical consequences of certain moves. It is not in our interest right now. And I would say that in the Dominican Republic, social democrats came to power with the PRD and to my knowledge even these social democrats, was did not resume, diplomatic relations with Cuba. I would add another thing according to what I have quite recently been told by an influential member of a Cuban cabinet, that I met at a meeting in England. Cuba is not obsessed either with the assumption of diplomatic relations with Haiti. Cuba is more interested in developing peaceful, friendly relations and to find some ways of cooperation in the economic and social fields. Our decision, therefore, is very simple: we can live with Cuba as a neighbor without interfering in Cuban affairs and with no interference from Cuba in our own internal affairs. I think that the Cuban problem will have

to be solved in a regional context, not in the national context. I think that the problem will be raised one day, at some kind of international forum, a regional forum in which Haiti will participate, but I don't think that for the moment it requires a national initiative.

APM President Manigat, could you conclude this question #2 by telling us something about Haiti's future relations with France, and with Venezuela.

LM First France. Here again we have a very interesting situation. Look at the present Haitian government, you will see a lot of people who have been trained in France. From the President to the Prime Minister, the Minister of External Affairs, to other members of cabinet. That means, that, the aristocrat origin of Haiti and the francophone character and tradition of our elites, that France is for us has a very important partner. And France is a very important partner in the political sphere for a lot of reasons. France today is a country with a strong current of modernization from which we may benefit. So, therefore, we have been friends. France is a country toward which we look quite naturally. It is the tradition. But let me make some specific points. Today, in France, what do we see? We see in France, the possibility since, DeGaulle, to have a more comprehensive North because since DeGaulle, France has developed a conception of North-South relations which is,

according to what I know, (except for the Scandinavian countries, Sweden for example) the most humanistic one that the North has developed toward the countries of the South. I am not saying that in all circumstances France has acted according to that conception. But at least, this conception, has been defined, and has in some cases been applied. So, therefore, we are interested in France as a more humanistic North, North which makes an effort to understand the South as being different. The case of the Lomé Convention, is one in which we are interested. When you compare the Lomé Convention to other systems of North-South dialogue and organizations, you see the evidence that Europe is a different North, because you see evidence of an effort to understand the demands of the South. Not only in the problem of financing development, not only of investment and commercial enterprise, but particularly in the field of stabilization of prices of commodities, through "Stabex". So, therefore, we look at France because, in the present conjuncture of the world situation, we think that by diversifying our partners, France comes, quite naturally, as the first nation toward which we look (after the United States). Now, there is something else. Because France has in the Caribbean two islands, Guadeloupe and Martinique, where I have lived and which are very close to our hearts. I have taught there, and we plan to develop our relations, with them. They are officially part of France, so therefore

that is an additional reason why we are interested in France. We have in our own region, then, two brother islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe which are our Caribbean friends, we would like to be more and more in harmony, in agreement with these Caribbean friends.

APM What is the status of your Government's relations with Venezuela?

LM Venezuela for us is a special case because we think that Venezuela is symbolic of our relations with Latin America. We want to be more associated, more integrated with Latin America, for a lot of reasons. One reason is historical: that is where our diplomatic relations and solidarity started. But also because we want to put an end to an ambiguity in the Haitian identity and position, because we have been for long the only purely black nation in Latin America and additionally, speaking French and not Spanish. We are in the kind of a special and singular position within Latin America. We don't think that now that the world has seen the evolution of Caribbean black nations and African black nations, that this any longer an obstacle. Secondly, the fact that we speak French is no longer an obstacle, because more and more Haitians speak Spanish. Besides, French, after all is a latin language. Therefore, we should realize what the world is seeing: that Haitians are Latin Americans too. We are definitely oriented toward that

kind of closer association with Latin America, and Venezuela represents for us the entry gate toward Latin America. But more than that, as you know well, with eight years of exile in Venezuela, we have some very strong personal and institutional links with Venezuela. And, there is one very serious point: Venezuela, since 1958, has made an experience of the democratic system, which we have observed with interest, this is very important, because in some institutional aspects Venezuelan democracy seems to us more interesting than even French democracy. I am not trying to exaggerate the virtues of the Venezuelan democracy. I have been there, so I know the negative elements or aspects of the Venezuelan system. But I must say that I have seen in Venezuela how parties deal with each other, how the liberties and freedoms has been respected, how institutions function. The supreme electoral council, for instance, really is a model of election organization as is the Comisión de enlace which functions during the transition period from one government to the other, helping guarantee the rights of the victor but also of the minority parties. Therefore, I think, we have a lot to learn from the Venezuelan experience. Of course, and unfortunately for us, Venezuela is no longer in the golden period of the oil bonanza, in what they sometimes called "Venezuela Saudita." Unfortunately, for us because at that time Venezuela was helping other countries in Latin

America, in the Caribbean to an extent that has no precedent. Venezuela spent between six and eight percent of its GDP in foreign aid, while the biggest, most developed countries in the world, only give one percent of their GNP. So, therefore, it is unfortunate for Haiti that we have come to power now when Venezuela no longer has the financial means and resources with which Venezuela could have been very helpful to Haiti. But, despite the limitations they still are a rich oil country and we think that we can cooperate in many ways, not only in the financial field but also for example in the model of relations between the military and the civilian government. This is also a field in which they have been successful. We can learn from that experience and also in areas such as technical cooperation, social cooperation, medical cooperation, with reforestation, and so on. Venezuela, therefore, is for us a prime and valued partner, especially because it brings to us the Latin American world.

APM President Manigat, could you address the question of foreign aid generally but very specifically the relationship of the approximately 300 non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in the process of development, as you have outlined it in this interview.

LM Well, first we do think that we must rethink the problem of foreign aid to Haiti. Nobody will say that foreign aid is not good. Foreign aid has helped us to accelerate the

process of modernization, the process of development. We welcome foreign aid. But, what I do say is that it must be foreign aid directly to our country. When we look at their part of the foreign aid which come to the masses, to the people, we see that this foreign aid has been channeled through intermediaries and a substantial part of that aid has been kept at intermediary levels. I can quote an example: a foreign expert within a program of foreign aid of his own country received as a salary in one of the schools of the University of Haiti \$100,000 a year, and this salary was part of the sum of foreign aid. With that money we could have had three Haitian experts of at least equal competence, if not superior competence, and we would still have been giving these Haitian experts salaries which were out of the ordinary in Haiti. So, therefore, unfortunately, in terms of salaries for foreign experts and in terms of the equipment we must buy from the donor countries themselves, a substantial part of this aid is kept at certain levels of the donor countries. We would like, therefore, to see the aid be more efficient, to be really channeled to the masses. But, there is also another issue. Since we are benefitting from aid from various countries, there is a problem in the coordination of this foreign aid, how to incorporate it into a national scheme of development. We have a very serious problem with this because we have many foreign agencies operating in Haiti, some bilateral, some of them

multilateral. But, most importantly, much aid goes through non-governmental organizations, and we have 300 or even more, according to what you say, working in Haiti. But each NGO in Haiti is doing what it wants, according to their own scheme, their own programs, own conceptions. Often there are different NGO's doing the same thing. Let us put it another way: I would say that the sovereignty of the country has been to a large extent abandoned to the initiatives and responsibilities of the NGO's. So, therefore, we have to organize the operation of the NGO's, to coordinate their presence and role in Haiti. This is one of the big problems facing the new direction we are taking in thinking about foreign aid. That is the reason why we have decided to let the Minister of External Affairs, whose Ministry is the entry gate for any international contact of the Government, dedicate himself to the coordination and organization of our foreign economic relations. We have given the Minister the additional title of Directeur Generale de la Cooperation International. Again there is another thing I would like to see result from foreign aid: Foreign aid must generate more national production, and encourage national participation in the building of the new society. This is very important for us. Foreign aid must contribute, not detract from second national participation in the building of the new society. This is very important for us. Third, Foreign aid must necessitate an inside national production, because in some



cases we see foreign aid competing with national production and jeopardizing national production. We do think, that if people come to help us they should help us produce and not compete with national production through their own products. That's one. This is really important. Second, we think that foreign aid must stimulate Haitian mobilization, Haitian participation not substitute itself for a national effort. We welcome that foreign aid, when it is needed, but we don't want to be perpetually, for all Haitian history, dependent on foreign aid. We want a process that allows us in some years, or in some decades to phase out the foreign aid while we gradually develop our own country. Like Taiwan did, Taiwan started with strong injection of foreign aid, but after fifteen or twelve years, I believe, they phased-out foreign aid and they are no longer in the position to need foreign aid. On the contrary. So therefore, we must create through foreign aid a process of gradual emancipation from economic dependency in order to be able to be self-sustaining after some decades. We should not maintain an eternal dependency. For example, let us look at the situation today. We know the national budget has problems. Just before you arrived in Haiti do you know what service has been terminated by the U.S.? The national service for the eradication of malaria. Now, Washington tells me that in their cuts of aid they have not cut aid in the humanitarian area. But what is the battle against malaria,

is that not humanitarian? So, therefore, you see what one of the problems with foreign aid is. We are not part of the definition of it. There is only one conception and it is their conception. If we were really partners we would participate in deciding what humanitarian aid is and what it is not. The fact that program monies for malaria eradication would not have been included in the humanitarian aid to Haiti is not acceptable. That is the reason why even as we welcome foreign aid from the big nations, we are also inclined more and more to look for South/South cooperation. Because South/South cooperation, in principle, does not have the same kind of problems with the definition of what aid is. But let us not exaggerate. Unfortunately South/South cooperation is not as strong as we would like to see it be because of the precariousness of the means available. There is another problem: providing external aid is not fully accepted in the "productive psychology" of the people of the South. The sentiment is moving the right direction, but the trend is still not as strong as it could be, if you compare it with the trend in the North. But anyway, as a matter of principle, as a matter of interest, we want to diversify our partners in the field of foreign aid and we have good relations with Germany -- a country which has never ceased providing aid. You see, that's one good example which will serve us in our cooperation with countries like Italy, Spain, but also with

Third World countries, as for example, in Africa and particularly in Asia. With the new developed nations in Asia we are sure that we can develop good and fruitful relations in the field of economic-social mutual cooperation because they have already started the process.

APM President Manigat, it is frequently noted that in Haiti there are three urban economic sectors in conflict a conflict which is structural but has also a political dimension, to wit: the conflict between that sector which you traditionally have called the commercial sector (commission agents importing for resale within Haiti), the sector which is involved in import substitution manufacturing and the newest sector in Haiti, the industrialization or assamblage sector geared to export, fundamentally to the American market. How will you attempt to harmonize state policy towards these three groups?

LM Well, let us start with the facts, the reality. You see, it is true, that there are, if not conflicts of interest at least divergence of interest between these three sectors. The more traditional one has been the commercial sector, export-import trade sector. They have been present since the beginning of Haitian history, there are part of the traditional system and there have been for a long, long time the only decisive factor in the economic field and in the political field. There have been the traditional oligarchy. The second sector, which is involved in import

substitution, has something to do with the Latin American trend, with CEPAL and so on, and has been -- at least -- a more modern sector compared with the first one, at the beginning. The third one -- the assembly industry -- at the time of Jean Claude Duvalier particularly to benefit from the opening up of the U.S. market and also from the new redistribution of industrial activities at the world scale. Now, what is the national interest of Haiti, and how to harmonize these three sectors? Let me start by saying that these three sectors are correctly analyzed as being three, but in fact for us, operational there are two. Why am I saying this? Because remember what I said earlier: The main problem of Haiti is modernization. Now, if you put our objectives in that light you must analyze these three sectors in the following terms: Where is there archaism and where is there modernity? Today the frontier line is not between the three sectors, but within each sector. When I say that there is no doubt that one of the most dynamic and most promising sectors is the national industry working with local raw materials for national consumption. I am making a choice. But I make that choice for one reason which is always very important. Industrialization must not be something artificial, it must correspond to the profound realities of what we can call "deep country." Now, what kind of economic activity is more in keeping with that "deep country?" There is no doubt that it is that industry which

transforms local raw materials into products for local consumption. The problems that we have in that sector are, firstly, that production, unfortunately, is too weak. We must make a special effort because production has been declining in Haiti. And second, we don't have an important market of consumers. Haiti has between 5 1/2 million and 6 million inhabitants. When you look at those figures you may draw the wrong conclusion because when you compare Haiti, with Trinidad, for example, and you say Trinidad has one million, 200 hundred thousand inhabitants, Haiti has almost 6 million so therefore Haiti is a more interesting market than Trinidad. But this is not true. Because we don't have six million consumers. We have six million inhabitants; we don't have six million consumers. So, the problem is how to convert six million inhabitants into six million consumers. The analogy is the problem that the industrial states had at the end of the 19th century, with the automobile industry: it was producing only for a minority. Those who could buy an automobile. Today, cars are within the financial reach of workers. It is a process of enlarging of the market. So, therefore, our problem is similar to the one that the car industry in the U.S. had to face at the beginning of the century. This is the reason why, this sector of the industry is interested in our policy of social justice, because if you want to raise the buying power of the workers so that they become consumers of our

own production, you must make an effort towards social justice in this country. That's one of the problems. That is the reason why, we find more understanding, more comprehension, more support from that sector than from any other sector in the society.

APM Let me make sure you are talking about the import substitution sector.

LM You can call it import substitution, if you want,

APM But using raw materials (some imported, some local) for local manufacturing and for local consumption

LM Yes, yes.

LM One other advantage I've seen in that area, is that at the same time that they are producing for local consumption, they can produce for export. I have visited some of the plants, while we were in the field. Take the agro-industrial field, for example. They are working for national consumption, but they can also produce for export. There is no impossibility, there is no contradiction. Let us take the "La Formosa" farm which I visited recently. "La Formosa" is really something important in Haiti. What they are doing is transforming tomatoes into juice and paste. As of now for the local market. But with the extension of their production they can do the same thing for export. But in order to achieve that they have to do two things which are crucial for the modernization process: first, stimulate cooperatives of tomato growers, and secondly rationalizing

land holding patterns -- many smaller plots into more productive holdings.

They are creating jobs while also producing for the local market and placing themselves in a position to export. So it seems to us, that this sector is one of the most important for the future of Haiti. Now, let us take the third one, the assembly industry. It is there, it has developed. It is good for the country, in a certain sense, because it has been the most dynamic sector in the national process for these past years. There is no doubt about it. It created a new industrial face or profile for Haiti. There is no doubt about it. It is a sector of industrial workers, some say as many as 60 thousand or 70 thousand in the industrial park of Port-au-Prince, working for export to the American market. They benefit from the geographic proximity of that market is and from the CBI This sector exists, we must encourage its development, maintain its existence because it is creating jobs in Haiti, there is no doubt about it. And it is benefitting from that American market. But now, what is the problem of this sector? It relates to the fact Haiti has a strict parity with the dollar, one for five, that we cherish, and we intend to defend that exchange rate, for a lot of reasons. This makes this sector a precarious one, because the competition is such that it is enough for a change in the monetary situation of any state to jeopardize the existence and the strength of this sector. To understand our situation let us take the case of Venezuela as an example. We used to be in the

same position, one dollar for five in Haiti, one dollar for four Bolivares in Caracas. Today it is still one to five in Haiti but one dollar for thirty Bolivares. So, therefore, by the simple effect of the change in the monetary parity expressed in terms of dollars, the salary of the workers in Venezuela, or in Mexico or in the Dominican Republic, may become lower than those in Haiti. Nearly immediately investors become interested in transferring their dollars activities in Haiti to places where things are cheaper in terms of dollars. So this is the reason why one must watch the evolution of events in this sector. And, this is one of the primary reasons why you cannot accept sudden increases in wages which might jeopardize the creation of jobs as well as existing ones. Because if you say the people are miserable because they are receiving only three dollars a day, and that this is impossible, not acceptable, so we should put the minimum wage at five dollars a day, you are going to kill "the goose who laid the golden egg." You see the problem. Not only do you have to watch the situation, you have to have the workers themselves understand that if we accept, in the name of a legitimate social justice, a process of increasing of wages, it will kill the enterprise, they will close down and go elsewhere. That is one of the problems that we have in the assemblage sector. Again, it is a sector which has been beneficial to our economy and which we want to preserve, develop and extend to its maximum. Now, let us come to the last one, the one I reserved for the last, the more traditional one: the commercial sector in the strict sense



of import/export trade. Here there is the problem of the tension between routine and modernization. Some of the people involved have become accustomed to living with what we call in French a "mentalité de rentier". They are suspicious of any move, any change which could jeopardize their interest. They don't see the necessity to expand, to modernize, because it has been always like that, their marginal profit, their security. They don't want to face the risk of changing. It is not, therefore, a true capitalist mentality. Nor is it, an entrepreneural mentality. Yet, I must say that for the past few years there has been developing within that sector a more modern segment. I recently called that segment "la bourgeoisie d'sprit capitaliste". They understand more and more the necessity of change, the necessity of transition, the necessity to abandon the oligarchic mentality and to accept a more democratic mentality, not only in the political field, but also in the economic relations, in the social relations with the unions as their partners. This latter is especially important because it is in that import-export sector that you traditionally have found resistance to unions. You also, of course, find this resistance in the other sectors. So, therefore, they have to change, to modernize their work relations and accept the unions as partners in the process of production. Finally, I must confess, that today, I observe some efforts towards the integration of the three sectors, and, overcome the divisions which exist. For instance, right now as we are speaking, there are attempts under way to harmonize the

interests of these three sectors and even to try to put the three under the same "hat", through a kind of committee, or other kind of institution. So, therefore, there is an effort to reduce traditional divergencies and move towards a more unified position favorable to modernization, economic and social modernization.

APM President Manigat, similar to the question of divergent sectoral interests in urban Haiti, there is a question about rural Haiti, still the majority of Haiti, although that is changing very fast. (I was looking at the statistics and they are absolutely amazed at the growth of the urban areas and the projection of that growth.) Agriculture faces a dilemma. Again, it stems from conflicting interests. How will you reconcile, for instance:

1. A certain degree of protectionism so as to encourage local production of staples (even though they have high production costs), and
2. The continued receipt and distribution of:
  - a. free staples as aid, and (b) keeping the cost of living down by opening up the market to imports which very often come cheaper than those locally manufactured.

LM Well, I will start with two considerations, two observations. First of all, it is true we are in the evolution of the country from a dominantly rural population

toward a more equilibrated rural-urban balance. But inspite of that trend, the country is still predominantly a rural one. With seventy percent of the Haitians live in the countryside the main part of the population is still composed of rural dwellers, of peasants. In attempting to understand where the national interest lies we know that the intend to exclude any minorities, but, you must take into consideration, first, who the seventy percent are. That's first. Second, we are in a system of free enterprise. We have adopted that position, not only as a matter of doctrine, but of reality as best for the country. But at the same time, that we accept the market economy we have the national interest to defend and national interest means also national production. If we take these two observations into account, our problem is the following: What does free enterprise, free trade mean for Haiti today? If we accept what I said earlir on, that Haiti is at the end of a stage, the end of a system, that we are going toward modernization, (which includes the process of industrialization), what does that mean for Haiti? It means that at the beginning of any new era of production -- even under the free enterprise system -- there tends to be some degree of protection. Let us look at economic history. England began the process of industrialization, then France entered into that stages initially accepting the free enterprise system. But eventually France had to protect its infant industries, vis-

a-vis, the more developed English industries. In Germany you had the same occur. In the Bismarck era, and after the Bismarck era, they had to protect their infant industries against the more developed industries. And we see the same occurring even today in Europe, where they face some harsh realities vis-a-vis Japan, for example. So, therefore, adopting the free enterprise system as one's economic system does not mean that one cannot use some kind of protection in order to protect the infant economy, infant production. We are even more inclined toward protection, because when you look at the products which are in competition with our national products, you see that many of them they are subsidized sugar. The problem, therefore, is not only, that we, unfortunately, are producing at high cost because of low productivity and the archaic state of of local sectors but also, because we are in competition, with countries which are defending their interests in the process of export. So, therefore, we have to take that into account. Let me take the example of rice. We were once an exporter of rice but this sadly changed under the Duvaliers. Today we face strong competition from cheaper rice. Our position concerning the rice issue is very simple: We must not permit the destruction of our national production of rice. There is no doubt about it, we cannot accept that foreign rice arrives to kill traditional production in Haiti. Now, does this mean that we shall limit ourselves to

protectionist policies, putting a high tariff on the rice from abroad in order to protect our rice? The answer is no.

The answer is not to prohibit rice entering legally through customs. Because if you do that, you are going to encourage archaism, you are going to encourage the attitude of not changing things, not modernizing production. So that's not the answer. No. The answer is to do what we called in French, modulér, modulate a policy. On the one hand, not to permit the killing, the destruction of the national rice industry, but at the same time, to encourage the Haitian rice industry to modernize its production in order to be more competitive. Gradually we should reach a stage where there will be no problem. We will, however, have to go through a period in which we are going to import the foreign rice in order to put some pressure on the producers of national rice. We must create the conditions for the use of fertilizers, for the modernization of their production. This should include incentives to them, a policy to encourage them, to facilitate that modernization up to the point when there will be no serious danger of being destroyed by the competition of foreign rice. The same thing holds for the porcine industry. There is an opportunity to modernize our pork industry, to move away from the same low productivity. Let me illustrate. In Haiti we call the imported big the grimelle pork. It generally sires 14 or 16 piglets. While in Haiti the

average has been 4, 5 or 6 piglets. So, therefore, there is in the foreign pig something like a challenge for us. We must not stay at the level of 4, 5, 6 piglets. We must reach a higher level, we must understand how to take advantage of this capacity of the foreign pig to sire 16 or 18. We must grab the opportunity to modernize our traditional porcine sector. That is why I am not at all in favor of protecting the national porcine production, as it is, against competition. We should use competition to put pressure on our national sector to modernize. But we must help in this modernizing precisely because of the competition they face is very strong. As with the case of rice, we must modulate, create a "customized" policy, in order to allow our production to survive and progress, while we import pork or rice from abroad, in order to satisfy the local needs of the population.

APM Thank you President Manigat. President Manigat, would you care to now make some concluding and final statement for this interview?

LM Well, I don't know if this a conclusion, but the idea is that want to develop, to realize the economic, social modernization of our country. As we said, in answer to the previous question, Haiti is still a peasant society. So, therefore, we have to pay special attention to the peasant sector when we speak of modernizing the country. And, in

that, what we think is that we must develop cooperatives. But we must develop our cooperatives through the original Hatian culture, using their strong, spontaneous cooperative spirit. That is the reason why we have created two new ministries, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Mutuality, and the Ministry of Culture. Now, what will be the tool, the instrument for that rural development? We want to cover the country with a network of what we call "La maison du peuple," (people's house). We want to cover the country with a network what we call "La maison du peuple," (people's house). We want to build around 2000 all around the country. That means an average of three for each rural section and the rest in the smallest towns, those under 1000 population. What is the role of "maisons du peuple"? It is first of all a center where the population will find the services from the state, for example the medical agent, the dentist and so on. By this I am not speaking of the normal services of the state in the bureaus where they are presently located but beyond those. I am seeking services for the rural areas, to give services to the local peasant population. Second, the "maison du peuple" will be a center for information. Because unfortunately in rural areas the information does not circulate well. We have had the transistor revolution because everywhere you will find people with transistors listened to radio stations. But we have to systematize, modernize, and equilibrate that. The

maison therefore, will be a center for information through with radio, and television. We will soon experiment in Haiti with a television receptor operating on solar batteries. We are going to start that in 40 villages and later will see how it can be expanded. So a Center for information. Third, the maison will be a center for formation, education, practical education in the solution of many problems. In that sense Venezuela has been an inspiration, it has developed the acude systeme, for basic education, for primary agriculture, for primary medical care, and so on. Fourth, it will be a center for the population to debate its problems. The population will gather there to discuss their problems and the solution of their problems; they will give their views. In this way they participate in the conception of their problems, the analysis of their problems and the suggestions they can give to the solution of their problems. Fifth, it will be a cultural center in which the popular culture will express itself, through handicrafts, music, dance and so on. It will be organized by the community themselves in order to promote Haitian culture. It will be a center of culture. And, finally this maison du pueple will be what we call in French "Un centre Nodal de Developpement," be a center of rural development. That the reason why there will be attached to each center a piece of land in which people can experiment with plantings. The maison will also create an



atmosphere, for example, which should encourage cooperation and solidarity between the military and the civilian. A new type of relationship between the police and the population and even, a new type of orientation towards solidarity and if possible, the apprenticeship of common happiness.

APM I have heard you expound (I think it was in Stanford University) on the concept of happiness. I think is the first time I ever heard a social scientist talk about happiness i.e. in operational term as a variable. One usually talks about it in terms of an ideal. Maybe you might want to tell us a bit of this notion of happiness.

LM Well, let me say it very briefly and very simply. What is the objective of development? I don't think it is richness because if it were richness then there is something terribly unjust in the world because the United States and the bigger countries have reached a degree of richness that we will never reach unless we discover some very precious resource that was unknown before. So the object of development for us is not richness. It is a decent life which is quite different from richness. A modest life, to satisfy the basic needs. But what is important, therefore, in developing this society, is to insure a quality of life. I have called this the capacity to smile with life and with others which I sometimes define as happiness. After all, what is a smile? A smile is not only an external expression. A smile is an internal expression. The

capacity to smile is something which gives an equilibrium to a lot of things. The capacity to smile to oneself first, to accept yourself. That means, not having any complex, not any unusual stress, any obsession which accounts for unhappiness. That is why you have first, to smile to yourself. Second, to smile to life. Here in Haiti you can see this people confronting a totally unacceptable situation of a lack of water and they can still smile. You can come to a peasant house, they are deprived of everything, but they will serve you the best that they have. If all they have for themselves, is a cup of coffee they will offer that cup of coffee to you. They can smile to life, smile to the others. This capacity of the Haitian to enjoy life is something we must preserve and promote. So, therefore, it seems to me that the true goal of development is not in quantitative terms, not only material welfare, but in qualitative terms. And what we call happiness corresponds to that ideal of accepting life, enjoying life, living within the community in a kind of solidarity. I would even say with the norm of love toward others. This does give a certain religious touch to the problem. Loving the others, I think there is a more serious, profound and worthwhile goal than only developing material welfare. And it seems to me that if we are to lead the society, if we are responsible leaders of the society, we should strive for a goal in which -- even in sometime hard conditions -- we find

a feeling of solidarity, a feeling of peace and loving, a feeling we must call happiness. I remember once at a meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank we are discussing the future of Haiti with a group of so called experts. I injected these comments about the pursuit of happiness in the analysis and someone at the meeting mentioned smiling, as a joke, that they were not interested in happiness. And I said: What a pity, you should be.