

INTERVIEWER: I'm talking to Wilfred Manuela Jr. Wilfred, now, you're here at the Open University, but this isn't your academic home.

**WILFRED
MANUELA JR.:** Yes, I'm from the Asian Institute of Management. And I'm here, actually, to explore some collaboration on research and developing some modules for online education.

INTERVIEWER: So tell us what you do at the Asian Institute of Management.

**WILFRED
MANUELA JR.:** I teach business economics and corporate finance, and I also do research, specifically on the air transport industry.

INTERVIEWER: And what are you hoping to do here at the Open University? Are you hoping to develop some collaborations?

**WILFRED
MANUELA JR.:** Yes. I've been talking with some academics, and we've talked about e-learning and how it can be used to enhance student engagement, as well as support our executive MBA programme.

INTERVIEWER: So you're hoping to come up with some ideas that you can take back home.

**WILFRED
MANUELA JR.:** Yes, of course. And, in the next few weeks, we'll be talking with other academics, as well, so we can explore areas of research with regard to, let's say, the impact of the new political realities on the macro economy.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent. It's increasingly important for academics internationally to collaborate and come together, and we're having this roundtable discussion where you'll be talking a lot about the implications of economic integration, but, specifically, you're researching, you mentioned, the air transportation industry. Tell us about what you're doing there.

**WILFRED
MANUELA JR.:** Well, we've started research on the ASEAN integration of the air transport industry, and we're looking at how it could benefit, you know, mobility of products and services, as well as people in the region, because that can result in better economic outcomes for other countries in the region, the 10 countries.

The problem is that Singapore is one of the most developed nations in the world. It's got one of the highest per capita incomes. And the disparity in economic development among these 10 countries is really great. So there would be disadvantages to countries like the Philippines

when we fully accede to this integration. And air transport is one of the areas where I would like to look into how it will be impacted by this integration in the future.

It has actually been ratified by the ministers of the ASEAN, but the Philippines and Indonesia have been very slow in implementing this new integration of the air transport industry, because they have sizable domestic markets to protect, like the domestic industry in the Philippines is a lot bigger in the international market for air transport, and the same with Indonesia, with over 200 million people. So just imagine if Indonesia started opening its borders to foreign airlines, and its domestic airlines will be disadvantaged because of the competition that they bring into this more open market for airlines.

INTERVIEWER: So as an economist, you're looking at the implications of this in terms of international collaboration.

WILFRED Yes.

MANUELA JR.:

INTERVIEWER: And also the consequences for each individual country.

WILFRED Yes. And more importantly, because of the disparity in economic development among these
MANUELA JR.: countries, we have to look into some institutional arrangements that we can probably limit the negative impact of such an integration would bring.

The ASEAN, actually, is very exciting, because it has a lot of people with-- the economies are growing very, very fast. And in countries like China, Korea, Japan would also like to be part, and it's now called ASEAN plus 3, you know, so that they cannot ignore this big market eventually, once it's fully integrated, and it can now trade with these countries-- Japan, Korea, and China-- as one big trading block.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. And so important, especially, if there is this massive population growth, and international transportation becomes so much more important.

WILFRED Yes, because the connectivity, of course, will enhance economic development. And while we
MANUELA JR.: are trying to flesh out, you know, the realities on the ground, whether we should go ahead with fully integrated air transport industry, because of what I just mentioned about the problems of certain countries with regard to their airlines, and they want to protect their domestic markets from competition.

I think we really need to be more integrated in this regard, because the benefits are actually more than the harm that they can probably bring because of our competition in a domestic market.

INTERVIEWER: A fascinating area in a very dynamic environment. Wilfred Manuela, thank you very much.

WILFRED Thank you so much.

MANUELA JR.: