

IATA says airlines will carry 3,6bn passengers by 2016

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: Airline passenger numbers are set to rise by at least 28% in the coming years to hit 3.6 billion in 2016, with China accounting for nearly one-in-four new travellers according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).



The Geneva-based organisation said on Thursday (6 December) that the 28.5% the global increase over the next five years means that airlines will carry 831m more people in 2016 than in 2011.

"Despite the current economic uncertainty, expected demand for flights remains strong," said Tony Tyler, director general of IATA, which said that aviation supports 57m jobs worldwide worth US\$2.2tn in economic activity.

Almost 500m new passengers are expected to travel on domestic routes and 331m will take international flights, IATA said in its *Airline Industry Forecast 2012-2016*.

And while the United States is to remain the largest air travel market over the five-year period – with 710m domestic passengers and 223m international travellers by 2016 – its growth rates "will be well below" the global average of 5.3% for international travel and 5.2% for domestic routes, IATA said.

By contrast, the emerging economies of Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East will see the strongest passenger growth, the report showed, with routes within or connected to China accounting for 193m of the 831m new passengers by 2016.

By 2016, IATA says, the Asia-Pacific region will represent 33% of global passengers, up from 29% in 2011 and ahead of North America and Europe, forecast to represent 21%.

IATA, which represents 240 airlines comprising 84% of global air traffic, forecasts that freight growth will expand at 3.0% annually, from 29.6m tons in 2011 to 34.5m tons in 2016.

Tyler described the increased passenger numbers as "good news for the global economy" since growing transport links "generate jobs and underpin economic growth in all economies."

But the IATA chief warned governments "to recognise aviation's value with policies that do not stifle innovation, tax regimes that do not punish success and investments to enable infrastructure to keep up with growth."

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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