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## **Asia Traffic Eclipses North America**

**IATA yesterday revealed that intra-Asia Pacific travel eclipsed North America as the world's largest aviation market in 2009. Asia Pacific passenger numbers rose to 647 million; this compares with 638 million within North America last year.**

## **Why the Asia Pacific region is dynamic**

By 2013, IATA estimates an additional 217 million travellers within the Asia Pacific region, extending its global leadership as North American markets continue to stagnate.

IATA Director General, Giovanni Bisignani stated the Asia Pacific region is “diverse, dynamic and with great potential”, adding the region’s aviation prospects are “improving faster than other regions”.

He noted, “in the US, there are three aircraft seats per year for each of the 300 million people who live there. China’s population of 1.3 billion is served by only 0.3 seats per person and India’s 1.1 billion population has only 0.1 seats available per person. The global air transport industry will triple in size when Asians travel as much as those in the US.”

The Asia Pacific region is also home to two of the world’s top five airlines in terms of profitability, according to IATA. “Achieving Asia Pacific’s tremendous potential is contingent upon short-term efforts to battle the impacts of the economic downturn with cost reductions and efficiency gains. Longer-term, Asia Pacific must also face global challenges including environment, security and liberalisation”.

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