The International Air Transport Association (IATA) reported global traffic results for August showing demand for air transport continuing to flatten-out, but with significant regional variations. Freight volumes shrank as business and consumer confidence continued to slip.
Demand for air travel expanded by 5.1% in August compared to the same month in 2011. This partly reflects a positive distortion owing to the timing of Ramadan. Adjustment for such seasonal fluctuations reveals that passenger demand has been basically flat since June and with only a 1.2% expansion since January. Carriers continued to moderate capacity expansion, limiting it to 4.1% growth, taking load factors to 82.1%.
August air freight volumes fell 0.8% compared to the previous year. The minor recovery seen at the start of the year has faded quickly and the stability seen in freight markets during 2012 could be under threat owing to continued economic weakness. Middle East, African and North American carriers bucked the trend and remained in positive growth territory (11.3%, 10.2% and 2.0%, respectively). All other regions saw freight volumes decline, the most significant being for Asia-Pacific carriers at 5.5%.
“Passenger markets have not grown since June and global air freight volumes are below previous year levels. In the face of these adverse conditions, disciplined capacity management has kept load factors high. There are always opportunities and some parts of the world are growing. But, overall, trading conditions are tough,” said Tony Tyler, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

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