

RwandAir on Wednesday May 3rd launched a major new African cargo hub in partnership with Qatar Airways Cargo. The cargo aircraft will fly from Doha to Kigali, twice a week.

Qatar Airways Cargo moved by Boeing 777 freighter landed at Kigali International Airport, in the company of local dignitaries, freight forwarders, partners, and customers, Qatar Airways Cargo's Chief Officer, Guillaume Halleux, and Yvonne Makolo, Chief Executive Officer of RwandAir.

Since March, Qatar Airways Cargo has created an intra-Africa service between Kigali and Lagos three times per week, and a weekly service from Istanbul via Doha to Kigali, all operated by an Airbus A310 aircraft.

In the run-up to the Kigali Cargo Hub launch, QAS Cargo, a subsidiary of Qatar Airways, provided consultancy support to RwandAir Cargo to help improve its cargo handling performance.

A team from QAS Cargo visited the cargo handling facilities and presented RwandAir with a detailed action plan for operational improvements and handling performance.

The team is now working together on a future roadmap, including a proposed improvement plan for its warehouse infrastructure, which will form part of a long-term strategic plan for the cargo division of RwandAir.

Guillaume Halleux, Chief Officer Cargo at Qatar Airways said that Africa is one of the world's fastest growing economies, yet for it to develop to its full potential requires investment in logistics infrastructures. Qatar and Rwanda have long-enjoyed bilateral trade agreements, with both Qatar Airways and Qatar Investment Authority having previously invested in Kigali International Airport and RwandAir.

"It was therefore a logical step that Qatar Airways Cargo supports RwandAir in its cargo ambitions. Our customers will benefit from both a reliable intra-African network through our Kigali hub, as well as enhanced service levels and cost synergies. We are proud to partner with RwandAir in establishing Kigali as the Central African hub in preparation for the Next Generation of air cargo on this fast-growing continent." He added.

Yvonne Makolo, CEO of RwandAir said that they're very proud to partner with Qatar Airways Cargo to launch the brand-new Kigali Cargo Hub, which will open up new

cargo opportunities across Africa.

“Africa is home to a hugely diverse economy, with businesses and entrepreneurs looking for better connections to create new markets and expand inward investment. Together we have created a fantastic new facility to meet this growing demand across Africa.” She added.

Qatar Airways Cargo currently serves 28 cities in Africa with a mixture of freighter and belly-hold services, carrying up to 2,800 tonnes to and from Africa.

The launch of Qatar Airways Cargo’s first cargo hub outside Qatar, and in collaboration with RwandAir, creates a strong foundation on which to expand a future-oriented African air cargo network and meet the 3-5 percent annual economic growth forecast for the continent over the next decade.

More African destinations are due to be added to the network at a later stage.