

Rwanda is preparing to launch home deliveries by drone, with U.S.-based company Zipline announcing that residents will begin receiving groceries, medicine and online purchases by air as early as 2026.

The new service will start in Kigali, Musanze and Rubavu, cities with high demand for essential goods and e-commerce. It marks an expansion of Zipline's work in Rwanda, where the company has delivered blood and urgent medicines to rural hospitals since 2016.

At the 9th Aviation Africa Summit 2025 in Kigali, Zipline unveiled its latest drone, the Platform 2 (P2), designed specifically for urban deliveries.

"We are confident that in 2026 we will be able to offer Kigali residents this new home-delivery service," said Pierre Kayitana, Zipline's country manager. "We are very excited and are finalizing testing before the official launch."

The P2 drone can carry 4 to 5 kilograms, enough food for up to ten people, and travel 20 to 25 kilometers per trip. With speeds of up to 100 kilometers per hour, it can cross Kigali in about 15 minutes.

Unlike earlier Zipline models that released packages by parachute, the new drone lowers goods safely using a tether system. Company officials say this makes it well-suited for densely populated areas and high-rise buildings.

The drone runs entirely on electric power, producing no emissions and operating autonomously, which Zipline says will reduce both environmental impact and delivery costs.

Zipline first introduced the P2 drone in Dallas, Texas in April 2025, where it has been tested in more challenging weather conditions than Rwanda's. Trials there are nearly complete, but Kayitana stressed that regulatory approval in Rwanda must come first.

"We are in talks with relevant authorities to ensure proper regulations," he said. "Safety comes first."

Zipline is also negotiating with restaurants, supermarkets and pharmacies to determine affordable pricing for customers.

At the summit, President Paul Kagame praised Rwanda's nearly decade-long

partnership with Zipline, which began with life-saving deliveries of blood.

“This technology does not only save time it saves lives,” Kagame said, adding that drone deliveries could help drive the future of digital commerce in Africa.