



KORONGO AIRLINES CEASES ITS ACTIVITIES

News / Airlines



Following the general assembly of the shareholders and management of Korongo Airlines on 4th of September in Lubumbashi, the decision has been taken to discontinue Korongo Airlines' flight operations and to start the necessary actions to dissolve the company.

Founded by Airbel (Brussels Airlines and George Forrest) and some smaller private Congolese shareholders, Korongo Airlines started its flight activities in 2012. The objective of the airline was to provide a reliable, comfortable and safe service, respecting all international aviation standards and thus to contribute to the transport development in the DRC and Africa. Korongo Airlines was entirely successful at doing so. The portfolio of clients who valued the service and the safety reputation of Korongo Airlines continuously grew over the last three years. The flights between Kinshasa-Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi-Johannesburg and Lubumbashi-Mbuji Mayi achieved high average seat load factors of more than 70 percent. Several international organizations and companies let their staff travel exclusively with Korongo Airlines. Despite these successes, the company has unfortunately not been able to reach profitability due to a lack of critical mass, operations based on a fleet of only one aircraft, which doesn't offer sufficient possibilities to amortize the fixed costs of an airline operation respecting all international safety standards.

In that context, the management, together with the shareholders of Korongo Airlines, have in recent months conducted intense discussions with different potential partners to find the necessary funds to further develop the activities of Korongo Airlines. Next to a close collaboration with the Congolese government, investments in both fleet and network are indispensable for the development of the operations of the young airline, to amortize the fixed costs and to provide profitability perspectives for the company.

Following the decision of the Congolese government to create a new airline beside Korongo Airlines, however, the potential investors have withdrawn from the project.

A particular event has recently accelerated the decision process on the development of the company's activities. Two weeks ago the airline's Boeing 737 was indeed severely damaged due to a maintenance problem on the runway in Mbuji Mayi. Operating conditions in the region remain extremely difficult for an airline, partly because of poor infrastructure in smaller airports.

Given these circumstances, the decision was taken to cease the activities of the airline.

The shareholders of Korongo Airlines wish to thank their clients for their confidence in the company and thank the staff for their very professional commitment.

Korongo Airlines will take its responsibilities towards its partners, its passengers, as well as Congolese authorities and administrations in compliance with the law.

Congo remains one of the most important long haul markets for Brussels Airlines

With 20 African destinations, Africa, and more in particular the Democratic Republic of Congo, continues to play an important role for Brussels Airlines. The Belgian airline continues its daily flights between the capital, Kinshasa, and Brussels Airport. In recent years the company has invested heavily in this service by increasing the number of direct flights. Their Airbus A330 aircraft have been refurbished with new cabins in Business and Economy Class and in the coming months Brussels Airlines will open a new Business Class lounge at Kinshasa airport.

Intensive cooperation with local authorities remains a priority

In the future, Brussels Airlines will continue to cooperate with the local authorities. This means that the Belgian airline remains open to putting its operational experience at the disposal of the Congolese government for the startup of Congo Airways and to continue the discussions that started before the summer. In this context, Brussels Airlines wishes the Congolese government every success with Congo Airways.

Brussels Airlines continues to expand its three core activities

Despite the difficult competitive environment, Brussels Airlines shows positive results both on its European network and its long haul network. The airline will therefore strengthen its focus on its three core activities; the European network, its long-haul offer with no less than 20 African destinations and its flights to the United States, which all meet expectations. The objective remains to develop Brussels Airport as a hub within the Lufthansa Group. In that respect it is important for Brussels Airlines to keep on investing in its African network, and particularly in its offer to and from Congo.

04 SEPTEMBER 2015

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