

Record order for aircraft by Etihad

UAE-based Etihad's US\$43bn order of up to 205 Boeing and Airbus aircraft, placed last week, will make it an "air cargo force to be reckoned with".

The order, signed at the UK's Farnborough International Airshow, comprises 100 firm orders, 55 options and 50 purchase rights and has the capability to increase Etihad's cargo capacity by up to 22,840cu metres.

Firm orders with Airbus are for 20 A320s, 25 A350s and 10 A380s; and with Boeing, for 35 B787s and 10 B777-300ERs.

Etihad claims it is one of the largest orders in

commercial aviation history.

Larry Woelk, industry expert and MD of the international division of George Henderson Recruitment, said the order showed Etihad had the ability to get serious about cargo.

Woelk said that although the order bucked the trend of the overall world economy, Middle Eastern airlines were performing well because of booming economies fuelled by the Iraq war and oil prices.

"The new order of aircraft makes Etihad a force to be reckoned with, and very competitive in terms of air cargo capabilities, comparable with other Middle Eastern airlines," he said.