

India's UTV moves to capture African markets

United Television (UTV), India's global media and entertainment company, has launched its movie channel in E Africa setting the pace for its strategic entry into Africa. UTV launched its Movies International business in Africa markets including; Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Zambia and Malawi, according to India's *Business Standard* newspaper.

 By [Walter Wafula](#) 27 Jun 2011



UTV Movies is a Hindi movie channel produced by UTV Motion Pictures, the largest motion picture studio in India.

"We are pleased to announce the expansion of our footprint into the African region, which boasts of a sizeable ethnic community and we are positive of living up to our commitment of providing quality entertainment products to our viewers across the world," UTV broadcasting CEO MK Anand is quoted as having said following the launch of the service.

UTV's growing footprint

The UTV group, in which the Walt Disney company holds a strategic stake, operates five media and entertainment divisions including; broadcasting, games content, motion pictures, interactive, and television content. The firm's focus is on creating, aggregating and disseminating media and entertainment content, according to information on the firm's website.

With the entry of UTV in Africa, the firm's broadcast footprint now encompasses the US, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the UAE.

The firm, which is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange, comes at a time when two European and Chinese pay-tv firms are also strengthening their footprint on the continent. The two including; Smart Television, a brand of Sweden's Next Generation Broadcasting, and Star DTV (Star Times) from China, have in the last two years launched in several African markets turning the heat on MultiChoice Africa's DSTV, Africa's largest pay-tv service provider.

Competition for DSTV in African market

Star Times, just like DSTV, has a presence in Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. Smart operates in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, but has plans of launching in other African markets as the nations migrate to digital broadcasting from analogue television and radio broadcasting.

The entry of UTV in Africa is expected to heighten competition in content development and provision on the continent. Already, firms like Next Generation and MultiChoice are locking horns over football broadcasting rights in markets such as Uganda where both have signed disputed deals with local football governing bodies.

The two firms are attempting to fill the gap that was left by Gateway Television (GTV), the British television company that collapsed at the beginning of 2009 at the height of the global financial crisis. GTV had aggressively signed deals with various country football league administrators in its attempt to create African content for viewers in Africa.

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