

# Challenges of broadcast media in Africa

By [Carole Kimutai](#)

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Kenya will host the first Broadcast and Film Africa Conference and Exhibition in Nairobi, 23 - 25 September 2008. The theme of the event is broadcast and film convergence in the digital age. Bizcommunity.com spoke to Sean Moroney, AITEC Africa chairman and the organisers of the event.

Moroney believes one of the challenges facing the media in Africa is the lack of capacity in terms of qualified and experienced professionals.

When asked what impact pay-TV has had on viewership numbers in Africa, he said, "At this stage it is a small impact relative to mass distribution via terrestrial free-view TV, but it is at the start of a rapid growth curve similar to that experienced in mobile telephony over the past ten years."

A large percentage of the content on local TV stations is from the western world, while not much content is produced locally. Moroney emphasised that only the development of high-quality content will turn the tables, combined with efficient distribution channels.

"Africa should not seek to emulate a CNN model which is entirely biased towards one national interest or viewpoint, rather it should seek to build on the world vision that the BBC and Al Jazeera try to pursue - however imperfectly at times. Journalists, whether in print or electronic, have to resist ethnicity, tribalism, nationalism, regionalism and all other forms of bigotry that lead to victimisation, exclusion, ethnic cleansing and even wars," said Moroney.

Responding to whether Africa has the capacity in terms of resources and human capital, to tell its own story, he said that "we need to aim to tell the world stories about what people face each day in their struggle for survival, and judging from the blatant crimes against humanity that Africa's despots, political charlatans and business racketeers get away with every day in Africa and the livelihoods and lives they steal from the masses, we certainly do not have anything close to the capacity needed."

He maintained however that "by investing wisely in the expertise needed to make the right purchasing decisions and then being able to implement and utilise it effectively," Africa can catch up with the rest of the world. "The cost of the technology itself is minimal compared to the investment that needs to be made in training and staff development to maximise its benefits."

On the future of broadcast media in Africa, Moroney said, "Like so many other sectors, it is bursting with potential - it can transform lives by informing and educating. But it can also spew out American soap operas, misinformation and depravity,

unless it is well-managed by its owners and professionals."

## ABOUT CAROLE KIMUTAI

Carole Kimutai is a writer and editor based in Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently an MA student in New Media at the University of Leicester, UK. Follow her on Twitter at @CaroleKimutai.

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