

Nairobi becomes new centre for media research agency

NAIROBI: US media research agency InterMedia has opened its third office in the world - after Washington and London - in Nairobi, Kenya. The launch of InterMedia Africa comes in conjunction with the AITEC Broadcast & Film Africa 2011 conference. InterMedia's launch into Africa will be celebrated on 6 July 2011, following the first day of conference activities.

InterMedia provides research into the views and habits of people around the world, particularly in challenging environments with hard-to-reach populations. Its clients include the World Bank, USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNESCO, the BBC World Service, the Department of State, Deutsche Welle, Sesame Workshop and the US Broadcasting Board of Governors.

Building strong research capacity

"This is an exciting step forward for InterMedia as it chooses to establish its first regional office in Africa," said Vivien Marles, the new head of InterMedia Africa. "It underlines the growing importance of the continent in media and communications research and is a testimony to InterMedia's commitment to building strong research capacity in Africa."

InterMedia specialises in finding out how people gather, share and shape information. A survey last year in Tanzania by AudienceScapes, a division of InterMedia, revealed radio continues to be the main go-to source for news and entertainment for most of the population, with 83% stating it as their main source of information. Family and friends were the next main source, followed by TV, and then SMS/ text messages.

Changing audience tastes

The AITEC Broadcast and Film conference 2011 is happening as Africa experiences changing audience tastes and media formats, requiring high-quality media research information in decision-making. Marles will be moderating a panel discussion at the conference entitled "Social media - A broadcaster's friend or enemy?" adding insights to the timely discussion of how broadcasters can harness the potential of social media to engage and expand their audiences.

The conference plans to host more than 30 international and local speakers and presentations covering issues for the electronic media across two days at the Oshwal Centre in Nairobi from 6-7 July 2011.