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## **UN report highlights need to make television more accessible to persons with disabilities**



ITU Secretary General Hamadoun Touré

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Television should be made more accessible to persons with disabilities, argues a new United Nations [report](#) released today, which identifies different accessibility options that would enable users to fully access audiovisual content.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies, more than 1.4 billion households worldwide have a TV, representing 98 per cent of homes in developed countries and almost 73

per cent in the developing world. But people with audiovisual impairments are not able to make use of this channel for information, education and entertainment purposes.

Accessible TV should be a fundamental tool in building inclusive societies.

As a response, ITU, in partnership with the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict), identified various accessibility options and explained how access services are produced and delivered so that regulators and service providers can better understand the issues and costs.

Closed captioning and signing for the deaf, audio description and audio captions for the visually impaired, and accessible remote control devices for the elderly and those with reduced dexterity are some of the accessibility options highlighted in the report.

“Accessible TV should be a fundamental tool in building inclusive societies,” [said](#) ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré.

“The emphasis of this report is on making digital media accessible. The transition to digital terrestrial TV broadcasting represents an ideal opportunity for ITU members to take the necessary steps to ensure TV is more accessible to everyone, everywhere.”

The report argues the implementing the identified measures would also support social inclusion for immigrants, ageing populations, and non-educated and marginalized groups.

“TV programmes are a principal source of news and information for such segments of the population, and are a key element in reinforcing social participation and community identity. Television also plays an especially crucial role in times of emergency, and can serve important educational purposes by transmitting courses and other instructional material,” the report reads.

New access services will need adequate radio frequency spectrum allocations, and the ITU is actively encouraging its 193 Member States to ensure that sufficient spectrum is given to support services promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities.

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[Ban urges inclusion of persons with disabilities into society](#)