

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Radio Day**

13 February 2022

On this edition of World Radio Day, the theme of which is radio and trust, we are celebrating the independence and reliability of radio.

We turn to radio, more than to any other medium, when we need to be informed. For example, in Europe, where fewer than one in five people consider social networks a credible source of information, more than half of all people trust radio.

This trust is all the more important under serious circumstances, as radio is the only medium which can reach so many households, especially in the remotest of areas. During a pandemic, radio thus remains one of the surest ways to know what to do, without controversy confusing matters.

Radio is often the medium through which learning continues when schools are closed. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, while three quarters of university students own a radio, only 30% have Internet access at home.

However, our trust in radio may be due to something even more profound: where images can be distorted or reproduced to the point of excess, radio establishes a more direct, more intimate relationship between speaker and listener. Of course, this close relationship must be coupled with a guarantee of independence and rigour. Our organization sees to this by promoting reliable and quality information everywhere through support for press freedom and journalists.

The best guarantee of radio's independence, however, is the diversity of those who make it and the diversity of their voices. Radio would not inspire such trust if we could not make it our own, regardless of our culture. While television requires more significant resources, radio offers communities, villages and schools an accessible means of sharing their knowledge. UNESCO is encouraging radio projects, for example in Cameroon, where an agreement to support community radio stations was signed in November.

For trust is the product not only of a constant effort to be independent, but also of better representation of diversity in terms of language, gender and ideas. Many radio stations have already taken up these issues; whatever their audience ratings, they will have UNESCO's solid support.

This February 13, let us all join together to express how much radio means to us. A medium over 100 years old, radio is today more relevant than ever. May it live on for many more years to come!