



Egypt



Country Overview:

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip, and the Red Sea north of Sudan, and includes the Asian Sinai Peninsula

Size: 1,001,450 sq km

Population: 85,294,388 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Cairo

Export-commodities: crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals, processed food

Import-commodities: machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products, fuels

Currency: Egyptian pound (EGP)

Ethnic groups: Egyptian 99.6%, other 0.4% (2006 census)

Religion: Muslim (mostly Sunni) 90%, Coptic 9%, other Christian 1%

Government type: Republic

Chief of State: President Muhammad MURSI (since 30 June 2012)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Hisham QANDIL (since 24 July 2012)

Language: Arabic (official), English and French widely understood by educated classes

Egypt is the 27th largest economy in the world.



Arab Republic of Egypt/Jumhuriyat Misr al-Arabiyah

Meetings and Negotiations

-In Egyptian business culture, punctuality is **not** as much of a priority. Working week takes place from Saturday through Wednesday.

-Handshakes are the **customary** greeting; they are somewhat limp and prolonged, although they are always given with a smile and direct eye contact.

-When meeting, woman must extend her hand first. If she does not, a man should bow his head in greeting.

-**Always** include research and documentation to support your claims. **Do not** use high-pressure tactics.

-Business meetings generally start after prolonged inquiries about health, family, etc.

-Business cards are given without formal ritual. **Make a point of**

studying the business card you receive before putting it into a business card case.

Business Attire

-Egyptians judge people on appearances; wear good quality conservative clothes.

-Men: dark colored, lightweight, conservative business suits with tie. **Avoid** wearing visible jewelry

-Women: conservative skirts knee length, dresses covering arms

Behavior

-Egyptians seldom see an offer as final, **expect to haggle**.

-Islam is practiced by the majority of Egyptians and governs all aspects of life.

-Egyptians believe direct eye contact is a sign of **honesty** and **sincerity**.

-Expect to be offered coffee or tea whenever you meet someone. **Always** accept the beverage.

Declining is viewed as rejecting the person.

-Pointing is considered **rude** and showing the sole of your shoe is considered an **insult** to another person.

Gift Giving

-Give gifts of a modest cost, expensive gifts can be viewed as a bribe. Gifts are given with the right hand or both hands, but **never** with the left hand.

-Gifts may be opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts:

-exquisitely made compass or small electronic gadgets

Gifts to Avoid:

-flowers traditionally used at funerals and weddings; liquor, perfume, leather goods from pigs, items related to dogs

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Business meetings generally start after prolonged inquiries about health, family, etc.

-The agenda and presentation materials should be **sent** in advance of the meeting, in both English and Egyptian Arabic translation.

-Business is hierarchical. The highest ranking person makes decisions, after obtaining group consensus. Decisions are reached after great deliberation.

-“Good morning” or “hello” they say “**Assalamo Alaikum,**” which means “May peace be upon you and may God's blessings be with you.”

Topics to Discuss:

-ancient and modern achievements, positive reputation of Egyptian leaders, sports: soccer [football], basketball, boxing, sailing

Topics to Avoid:

-Israel, inquiring about female members of your counterpart's family