

Kenya



Country Overview:

Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Somalia and Tanzania

Size: 580,367 sq km

Population: 44,037,656 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Nairobi

Export-commodities: tea, horticultural products, coffee, petroleum products, fish, cement

Import-commodities: machinery and transportation equipment, petroleum products, motor vehicles, iron and steel, resins and plastics

Currency: Kenyan Shilling (KES)

Ethnic groups: Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 14%, Luo 13%, Kalenjin 12%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 6%, other African 15%, non-African (Asian, European, and Arab) 1%

Religion: Christian 82.5% (Protestant 47.4%, Catholic 23.3%, other 11.8%), Muslim 11.1%, Traditionalists 1.6%, other 1.7%, none 2.4%, unspecified 0.7% (2009 census)

Government type: republic

Chief of State and Head of Government: President Uhuru KENYATTA (since 9 April 2013); Deputy President William RUTO (since 9 April 2013).

Language: English (official), Kiswahili (official), numerous indigenous languages.



Republic of Kenya/Jamhuri ya Kenya

Meetings and Negotiations

- Punctuality is expected.
- Address the person by their most distinguished title and surname.
- Always greet the eldest person first, then proceed around the table/room greeting the rest in turn.
- Grasp the right wrist with the left hand while shaking hands to demonstrate respect.
- Smile, and ask them how they are doing **“Hujambo?”**.
- Common practice is to converse with direct eye contact.
- Use **both hands** when giving and receiving business cards.
- English is widely spoken so no need to translate business cards.
- In their attempt not to cause problems, Kenyans often use metaphors, analogies and stories to make a point.

Business Attire

- Kenyans dress in a conservative manner with an emphasis on appearing smart and well dressed as a matter of pride.
- Men-dark suit, collared shirt, tie, black shoes
- Women-dark suit, shirt, low heels, knee length skirt or smart trousers

Behavior

- Conversations tend to be **polite**, beginning with ‘How is your work?’ ‘How is your home?’ ‘How is your family?’ and is often injected with good doses of humor and laughter.
- Direct and frank communication is **not** the norm in Kenya. They prefer to hide their true feelings, especially when speaking on financial matters.
- Kenyans don’t usually point with a finger.
- Losing ones temper and shouting

is considered highly **rude** It’s best to remain polite and smiling, even if frustrated.

-In Muslim culture, the left hand is considered **unclean**, so do not shake hands, give gifts or business cards with only the left hand.

-When dining, wait for the eldest person to start eating.

Gift Giving

- Small token gifts, such as simple corporate marketing pieces that have no real value. Valuable gifts would be seen as attempting to **buy** influence.
- Gifts should be nicely wrapped, although there are no prohibitions concerning the color of paper.

Appropriate Gifts:

-corporate diaries, pens, promotional material

Gifts to Avoid:

-pork related items and alcohol (unless you know the specific preferences of the receiver)

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- As relationships are important in Kenya, after the handshake, it is **important** to ask questions about health, family and business.
- Habari za asubuhi? - How is your morning? Habari za mchana? - How is your afternoon? Habari za jioni? -

How is your evening? Jambo-Hello! Kwaheri-Goodbye! Marahaba-Thank you.

- Kenyans value tradition. Therefore, it is a good idea to provide a historical framework when introducing a new idea or process.
- Showing anger is considered a sign of mental instability. Kenyans pride themselves on

their emotional control and expect the same in others.

Topics to Discuss: Football-Harambee Stars the national team, rugby, long distance running, cricket; Good to ask about a person’s children

Topics to Avoid: Not acceptable to ask about a person’s spouse. Do not criticize the government.