



Burundi



Country Overview:

Location: Central Africa, east of Democratic Republic of the Congo

Size: 27,830 sq km

Population: 10,888,321 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Bujumbura

Exports-commodities: coffee, tea, sugar, cotton, and hides

Imports-commodities: capital goods, petroleum products, foodstuffs

Currency: Burundi francs (BIF)

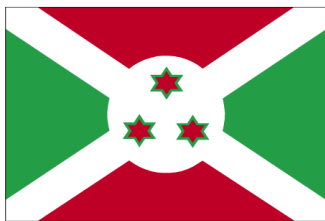
Ethnic groups: Hutu (Bantu) 85%, Tutsi (Hamitic) 14%, Twa (Pygmy) 1%, Europeans 3,000, South Asians 2,000

Religion: Christian 82.8%, Muslim 2.5%, Adventist 2.3%, other 6.5%, unknown 5.9%

Government type: republic

Chief of State and Head of Government: President Pierre Nkurunziza (Hutu)

Language: Kirundi (official), French (official), Swahili (certain areas)



Republic of Burundi/Republique du Burundi

Meetings and Negotiations

-Use your right hand when shaking hands.

-Men greeting men— a handshake is appropriate.

-Women greeting women— a handshake and/or nod of acknowledgment is appropriate.

-Greetings between men & women – the man should follow the lead of the woman, who may decide to shake hands or to simply nod in acknowledgment.

-**Punctuality** is important in business situations and when meeting government officials.

-Conversations are usually preceded by questions about the family and other niceties.

-When first meeting someone, it is best to broach neutral topics of conversation such as peace, health, family, and work.

-Most people tend to be **indirect**, talking around issues

instead of discussing them directly.

Business Attire

-The way you dress is an indication of your social position and importance.

-Men wear suits, a tie, and dress shoes. They favor dark or neutral colors.

-Women wear **conservative** dresses and conservative blouses—tending to dress up rather than down. Women will **limit** accessories and make-up.

Behavior

-**Personal space** is important: the greater the gap in rank, the greater the distance maintained. The norm is a little less than an arms length apart.

-Good friends and family will stand much closer together.

-Touching someone shows that you know him/her well - it is **not advisable** to touch someone unless the individual indicates it is

okay.

-Relationship building is very **important** – take the time to build a relationship.

-Generally, people prefer **indirect** eye contact. Overly direct eye contact can be considered aggressive.

Gift Giving

-Gifts are nice gestures and are appreciated, but are **not** expected.

Appropriate Gifts:

-something small from your country .

-fruit, other food items, and books .

-often, wrapped gifts will be put aside in public and opened later in private

Gifts to Avoid:

- giving large gifts as they may be seen as bribes.

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Humor is acceptable, but do **not** go overboard as you will not be taken seriously.

-**Avoid** sarcasm.

-Kirundi is spoken by all Burundians.

-French is used in official and legal documents, as well as by

the media , in universities, and for international communication.

-People in Bujumbura or near Lake Tanganyika may speak Swahili as well.

-Knowledge of English is increasing.

-Basic phrases in Kirundi. “Hello, good morning” is “bwakeye”/”mwaramutse.”

“Good afternoon” is “mwiriwe.”

Topics to Discuss:

-neutral topics such as peace, health, family, and work

Topics to Avoid:

-anything related to ethnicity, regionalism, sexuality, religion, or criticism of government policies