



Cambodia



Country Overview:

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, between Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos

Size: 181,035 sq km

Population: 15,205,539 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Phnom Penh

Exports-commodities: clothing, timber, rubber, rice, fish, tobacco, footwear

Imports-commodities: petroleum products, cigarettes, gold, construction materials, machinery, motor vehicles, pharmaceutical products

Currency: Riels (KHR)

Ethnic groups: Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, Chinese 1%, other 4%

Religion: Buddhist 96.4%, Muslim 2.1%, other 1.3%, unspecified 0.2%

Government type: multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy

Chief of State: King Norodom SIHAMONI (since 29 October 2004)

Head of Government: Prime Minister HUN SEN (since 14 January 1985)

Language: Khmer (official) 95%, French, English



Kingdom of Cambodia / Preahreacheanachakr Kampuchea

Meetings and Negotiations

- Punctuality is **important**. Arriving late shows a lack of respect for the person with whom you are meeting.

- When meeting a group, you will be introduced to the **highest** ranking person, similarly you should have the most **senior** of your group greet them.

- Handshakes are the norm, although **be careful** not to be too firm as this may be construed as aggressive. The traditional greeting is a bow combined with a bringing of the hands together at chest level. Women may still use the traditional Cambodian greeting. The simple rule is to respond with the greeting you are given.

- In Cambodia people are addressed with the honorific title "**Lok**" for a man and "**Lok Srey**" for a woman followed with the first name or both the first and surname.

- Small talk should **always** be employed at the beginning of meetings.

- Business cards should be exchanged **after** the initial introductions.

- Use the **right** hand or both hands when offering or receiving a business card. It is **important** to treat business cards with respect.

- Meetings do not stick to any schedule or agenda.

- Building a relationship on mutual trust is crucial, so initially, time should be invested in getting to know your counterparts.

Business Attire

- Men usually wear a suit and collared shirt. Women should dress modestly. If a woman wears pants to a business meeting, she may wear a matching blazer.

Behavior

- The concept of "**face**": a combination of honor, dignity and public reputation that is attributed

to a person. Protecting both one's own and other's face is extremely important. **To take face:** when someone is criticized, embarrassed or exposed in public. **To give face:** by complimenting someone publicly, i.e. for their business acumen or hospitality.

Gift Giving

- Gifts are usually wrapped in colorful paper (green or red).
- When giving gifts use both hands.
- Gifts are not opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Books in English, language tapes and magazines will be greatly appreciated by business people seeking to improve their command of the English language.

Gifts to Avoid:

- Knives, white wrapping paper is the color of mourning, shoes/socks make inappropriate gifts in Cambodia because feet are considered unclean.

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- Buddhism reinforces a sense of hierarchy within society. As a foreigner you may find that people ask personal questions - this is a means to identify your 'rank' rather than being nosy.

- **Never** discuss business in social settings.

- Khmer is the official language of

Cambodia and is used in most social contexts.

- It is a good idea **not to** speak with bravado, which may be interpreted as boasting.

- If Cambodians disagree with an idea, they generally remain silent.

- Be sure to **speak clearly, slowly** and to avoid use of slang, adages and colloquial sayings.

- **Avoid** prolonged eye contact.

Topics to Discuss:

- food, culture, wild life, the beautiful geography, Prasat Angkor Wat (a major tourist destination)

Topics to Avoid:

- Khmer Rouge rule, deforestation, Thai/Vietnam/Cambodia politics, criticism of the monarchy, French colonial occupation.