

Guide to International Protocol

Introduction

Proper and respectful protocol is essential in developing and maintaining international relationships. Protocol is generally viewed as more important in other cultures than it is in Kenya.

First impressions are very important. Kenya's international image can be permanently affected as a result of how we handle protocol.

This brief guide offers general suggestions about proper international protocol while visiting other countries and while hosting international visitors.

Some guidelines relating to specific kinds of events are also included. Anyone who would like further assistance should contact the Office of President of Kenya.

General Guidelines

The cardinal rule that should guide your thoughts as you plan to receive international guests or travel abroad is: "When in doubt, err on the side of excess." One doesn't have to apologize for being too kind and respectful. One cannot recover from an affront and disrespect. Often what Americans might view as appropriate would be seen as minimal in many other cultures. As members of the global community, a sensitivity and understanding of cross-cultural protocol is vitally important.

General Guidelines for Hosting International Guests

Setting up the Schedule

1. Has the guest visited Kenya previously? The answer to this question will make a difference in the activities that are set up for the guest.
 2. Having one person in charge of the schedule is highly recommended. That person can notify everyone who will be seen by the visitor and remind them of protocol. In addition, that person should explain why the person is interested in visiting them so that they can prepare properly for the visit.
 3. In preparing the visitor's schedule, the possibility of jet lag should be taken into consideration. It's also a good idea to allow a little down time for the visitor to take care of personal business and relax.
 4. Who should the visitor see? Generally speaking, the President should have some contact with visitors. The status of the visitor and the significance of the event would dictate the extent of the President's involvement. The guest list at events or meetings should include appropriate individuals with at least one person at an equivalent level of status as the highest-ranking visitor.
- What should the visitor see? A tour is a tour is a tour unless you put some planning into it. Match the tour to the visitor's interests and needs. Many of us take the grounds and architecture of our campus for granted. The visitor won't. Make it a walking tour if possible. A typical classroom looks pretty much the same all over the world. Show the visitor a mediated classroom. Computer labs all look alike, but one that would allow a demonstration of specific software would hold interest. Highlight our uniqueness and cutting edge initiatives are trained to give tours, so it's a good idea to use them, but at least one official should accompany the visitor. A mandatory stop for all international visitors should be the Office of the President. For all visitors, this will underscore our commitment and involvement in internationalization. For it will reinforce our professionalism and level of support. Another stop should be a Tourist shop,

where visitors might want to purchase souvenirs.

Making Introductions

It's important to introduce visitors to all with whom they come in contact. Titles should be included in the introduction. Handshakes are generally exchanged more frequently in other cultures usually upon greeting and leave-taking. Exchange of business cards is usually expected.

Gift Giving

Gift giving is an important part of international protocol. Gifts should be high quality, but they can vary based on the status of the visitor. If it is a group, small distinctions should be made in the quality and/or quantity of gifts based on each person's status, but no one should be left out. The most impressive gifts should be reserved for the President to give to the highest-ranking visitors, e.g. a visiting President.

Consideration should be given to the most appropriate time to give the gift.

Accommodations

For short visits, the Government should pay all meals taken on or off the Airports with or without a Government official. Costs of hotel presidential suites accommodations don't vary greatly, so a quality room should be reserved. A nice touch is to leave a small gift, light snacks, bottled water and Kenya Tourism promotional materials in the guest's room. A car and driver should escort the guests wherever they need to go, including to and from the airport

Suggestions for Specific Events

A photographer should record all events. Often there should be consideration for involving local media as well.

Signing Ceremonies

Ceremonies where accords, statements of collaboration, student exchange agreements and similar documents are signed should have an air of formality. These should be viewed as dignified and solemn events. The President should always be presiding over such an event. Gifts can be presented here. They should be kept discreetly out of sight so that in the event the visitor did not bring gifts, they can be taken away to avoid embarrassment. The flags of both countries should be prominently displayed.

Any memorabilia from the visitor's institution or country already in Kenya's possession can be displayed. Anyone who has a lapel pin from the visitor's institution should wear it. There should be modest refreshments, flowers and similar trappings. The media should be invited. Since their attendance cannot be guaranteed, a photographer should be there to record the event. Later, pictures should be mailed back to the visitor with a letter from the President. As at any public event, words of welcome are expected. Attractive pens with the Kenyan flag should be on the signing table.

One becomes a gift after the signing even if the visitor chose to use a personal pen to sign.

Luncheons and Dinners

Everyone may not arrive on time so it's advisable to gather in a nice lounge area before going to the room where the meal will be served. Meals should be dignified events where conversation is encouraged. Highest-ranking individuals should be given a tasteful presidential dinner.

In many cultures, socialization is more important than sustenance. Make an effort to distribute visitors with English fluency evenly around the table. The senior visitor in a group or the single

visitor is always seated to the right of the host. If possible, use place cards to ensure the people will be distributed according to the plan. Place cards can become a nice souvenir. Gifts are very appropriate here and it's not necessary to keep them out of sight. It is not advisable to prepare foods from the visitor's culture unless you are absolutely certain it can be prepared properly.

Receptions

It is always appropriate to host a reception for international visitors. Kenya Government personnel with equal rank of the visitor should always be invited. The President should be invited as well, but unless the visitor is of equal rank the event should not be postponed to meet the President's schedule. It is also good to invite local or state officials depending on the guest being received.

International students or local community people from the visitor's culture may be able to help with preparing authentic foods and hors d'oeuvres. This always adds a nice touch along with background music from the visitor's culture. Wine may be served by special permission of the President.

Conclusions

These brief guidelines are meant to be representative of the types of things that reflect proper international protocol. There can be variations for different cultures and circumstances

Things to Consider

The following partial checklist is recommended.

- Check on current affairs from the country to be visited before leaving so you can report on how they are doing.
- Learn about foods and food etiquette.
- Check with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for specific suggestions on targeted countries.
- Observe all safety recommendations, such as going out by yourself in a foreign country.
- Take brochures and other Country materials. Every trip is a public relations and recruiting trip in part.
- Anticipate questions about Visiting Country President / Kenya so you can be prepared.
- Learn about expectations in dress and etiquette.
- Practice the pronunciation of names.

Proper Flag placement during events, seminars and meetings can be confusing.

When Flag Protocol is broken, it can be very embarrassing and can leave an unfavorable impression on your audience.

Imagine the President, or a foreign dignitary visiting your locality. The first thing they see in front of your office is the Kenyan flag or their country flag being flown on a lower staff than the other flags.

Without realizing it, you have just offended your guest.

Outlined here are a few guidelines to assist you in properly handling and displaying flags, which is a matter of sense

Flag Handling

When you were younger, you may have been taught never to allow the Kenyan flag to touch the ground. You may have learned how to properly fold the flag using the angle fold. Today you may fold

or roll the flag in place of the traditional fold, when there are no observers.

In addition, many times a combination of flags is displayed including national local and / or organizational flags. The order of precedence is as follows: (1) National flags arranged alphabetically

When displaying flags of two or more nations, the flags should be the same size and flown from separate poles at the same height.

The method of using a center higher pole for the Kenyan Flag should not be used either outdoors or indoors with the display of flags from other countries as it is inappropriate to display national flags at varying heights during times of peace.

Outdoor Display

Outside flags are not fringed, are 5" by 3" in size, and are to be hung on a 12 foot or higher pole. The exception to this rule is if the Flag is displayed for patriotic reasons and is properly illuminated during the hours of darkness. Additionally, unless the Flag is constructed from an all-weather material, it should not be displayed during inclement weather.

The Kenyan Flag should also only be hung at half-staff during times of national mourning or as directed by the President.

If you are flying flags outside your company or office building and the poles are the same height, the Kenyan Flag is placed to the right of the other flags. In other words, when you look at the building, the Flag is to your left. If however, the pole structure has a higher center pole, the Kenyan Flag should be in the center on the highest pole and then continue with the order of precedence with the next ranking Flag positioned to the right.

Indoor Display

The size of the Flag is dependent on the ceiling height in the room and the size of the pole. An indoor 3' by 5' Flag should be hung on an eight foot pole and a 4' by 6' Flag is used with a 9' pole. These measurements do not include the emblem and stand.

Setting a stage with flags provides several options. Typically, the Flag is positioned to the right of the speaker (observer's left) and the other flags are positioned to the left of the speaker (observer's right) following the order of precedence.

However, the positioning of flags on a stage is determined by the best location. Flags may be placed centered directly behind the speaker, all to the right of the speaker.

Challenges that can cause any sort of Embarrassment should be avoided at all cost by having a Disaster Prevention Strategy, which is of cause having a stock of flags for different Nations at your disposal.

Protocol dictates that any president visiting your country, should be driven car that bears his country Flag. The room or Hotel he resides in should also fly the same.

Having to request for flags from another source can hugely be a nuisance in times of urgency