

# South Africa at a glance

Fact sheet for brand ambassadors  
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South Africa is the powerhouse of Africa with the most advanced, broad-based economy on the continent; a thriving democracy; and infrastructure to match any first world country.

It has an abundance of natural resources; well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; and the 26<sup>th</sup> largest GDP in the world.

- Population: 50.59-million
- Area: 1 220 813 square kilometres
- Nominal GDP est (3q 2011): R755-billion
- GDP growth rate: 4.1%
- Labour force: 17.32-million

# Geography

South Africa is a medium-sized country, with a total land area of 1 220 813 square kilometres, roughly the same size as Niger, Angola, Mali or Colombia.

It's mostly warm and sunny, boasting a diverse landscape of semi-desert, mountainous, coastal, bushveld and subtropical terrain.

The smallest of the nine provinces is the tiny and bustling Gauteng, a highly urbanised region; and the largest is the vast, arid Northern Cape, which takes up almost a third of South Africa's total land area.

Natural resources include gold, chromium, coal, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, tin, rare earth elements, uranium, diamonds, platinum, copper, vanadium, salt and small natural gas.

# People

South Africa is a nation of diversity, with 50.59-million people and a variety of cultures, languages and religious beliefs. Some 62% of the population is urbanised.

The 11 official languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho saLeboa, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

Some 79.8% of South Africans are Christian, 15% have no religion, and 1.4% are undecided. Islam is the religion of 1.5% of South Africans, Hinduism that of 1.2%, African traditional belief 0.3%, Judaism 0.2% and other beliefs 0.6%.



# Economy (1)

With the unique combination of highly developed first-world infrastructure and a vibrant emerging market economy, South Africa is an investor's dream.

The country boasts sound economic policies, a favourable business and legal environment, advantageous access to other markets in Africa, excellent industrial capability and cutting-edge technology.

South Africa's GDP is the 26<sup>th</sup> largest in the world and its stock exchange the 18<sup>th</sup>. Some 17.32-million South Africans are economically active.

Structure of the economy:

- Finance, real estate and business services - 21%
- General government services - 15%
- Wholesale, retail and motor trade; catering and accommodation - 13,9%
- Manufacturing - 13,5%



## Economy (2)

Key industries are mining (world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium), automobile assembly, metal-working, machinery, textiles, iron and steel, chemicals, fertiliser, foodstuffs, and commercial ship repair.

Agricultural products include maize, wheat, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables; beef, poultry, mutton, wool and dairy.

South Africa's main export partners are China (10.3%), US (9.2%), Japan (7.6%), Germany (7%), UK (5.5%), and Switzerland 4.7%. Its main export commodities are gold, diamonds, platinum, other metals and minerals, machinery and equipment.

The country imports machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum products, scientific instruments, foodstuffs from China (17.2%), Germany (11.2%), US (7.4%), Saudi Arabia (4.9%), and Japan (4.7%)

Currency: US\$1 = R7.94    R1 = 100 cents

# Government

South Africa is a vigorous multiparty democracy with an independent judiciary and a free and diverse press.

Until 1994, the country was known for apartheid - white-minority rule. Its ability to put centuries of racial hatred behind it in favour of reconciliation was widely considered a social miracle, inspiring similar peace efforts in Northern Ireland, Rwanda and elsewhere.

The highest law of the land is the new Constitution, considered one of the most progressive in the world. The Constitution's Bill of Rights protects equality, freedom of expression and association, property, housing, healthcare, education, access to information, and access to courts.

Protecting these rights is the country's independent judiciary, subject only to the Constitution and the law.

With 13 parties in Parliament, South Africa has a vibrant political system. The African National Congress is in the majority, but opposition parties remain robust and vocal. National elections have been held in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009.