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James Kariuki has been Counsellor and Head of Politics, Economics and Communication Group at the British Embassy in Washington D.C. since July 2012. This is his second tour in the United States, having served at the UK Mission to the UN in New York from 2002 to 2007. Between these postings James held a series senior roles in London: Head of Policy Planning for Foreign Secretary David Miliband (2007/08); Deputy Director in Gordon Brown's National Economic Council (2008/09); Deputy Director for Europe in the FCO (2010/11).

After graduating from Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1992, James began his career on Middle East affairs: first on the Iran desk and then on secondment to the UN weapons inspection team in Baghdad (UNSCOM). He was then posted to the British Embassy Caracas, where he became the first Western diplomat to engage Hugo Chavez as a Presidential candidate. A spell in London from 1998-2002 covered mostly multilateral and economic issues: first as head of the G8 Summit team under Tony Blair; then as head of the FCO team focusing on EU economic policy.