



**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Department of Marketing management**

**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF CONFERENCE TOURISM IN  
BUILDING ADDIS ABABA'S BRAND: FROM STAKEHOLDERS  
AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS'  
PERSPECTIVE**

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**May, 2015**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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PERSPECTIVE**

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A Thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Commerce  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Marketing Management

May, 2015  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Commerce**

This is to certify that the thesis research prepared by Bekele Uma, entitled “Assessing the role of Conference Tourism in building Addis Ababa’s brand: from stakeholders and international conference participants’ perspective” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Marketing Management complies with the regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to the originality and quality.

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**Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator**

## **Acknowledgement**

This study would not become possible without the contributions from many people and organizations. In this segment, I would like to acknowledge each and every person who has contributed their effort by whatever means directly or indirectly. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my advisor Dr. Getie Andualem for his invaluable assistance and advice, constructive comments and observations throughout this thesis research.

I am indebted to forward my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to my best friend Nafbek Solomon (MA) for being with me at all and dedicated your time for the work of my thesis research that you had invaluable contributed to the study and words are not enough to express my sincere gratitude. Your kind and generous help, constructive advice, dedication and diligent efforts have been decisive for the quality and effective accomplishment of this study, and, you will always be in the conscious part of my mind.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge all the respondents who participated in the interview sessions and questionnaire survey and also to those who were involved directly or indirectly in the completion of this study. My endless gratitude and deepest appreciation goes to my friend Zelalem Mulatu Demu, who assisted me during this research study. I thank you a lot and appreciate your help ever.

Above all, words fail me to express how grateful I'm to Almighty God who gave me chances to 'experience' life and for his endless blessing.

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

UNWTO: United Nation World Tourism Organization

DMOs: Destination Marketing Organizations

MoCT: Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Ethiopia)

MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences/Conventions and Exhibitions

WTO: World Tourism Organization

ICCA: International Congress and Convention Association

UNCC: United Nation Conference Center

AUCC: African Union Conference Center

UNECA: United Nation Economic Commission for Africa

AU: African Union

CT: Conference Tourism

ECA: Economic Commission for Africa

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN: Cable News Network

AACoC: Addis Ababa chamber of Commerce

AA: Addis Ababa

## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to assess the role of Conference Tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination. The study is descriptive type of research in its nature and employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Interview, questionnaire and observation were the main data gathering tools. The interview was undertaken with experts and conference organizers. The key informants' interview was taken with twelve conference organizers of conference organizing companies here in Addis Ababa. Through a convenience sampling technique, 396 questionnaires were distributed to International conference participants at Hotels, AU and UNECA and all questionnaires were collected successfully and analyzed. The collected data were analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings demonstrated that there were weak linkage and cooperation among those stakeholders involved in the conference industry in Addis Ababa. Moreover, this conference activity contributes to national and regional economies through investment, construction and generation of employment, and amounts to economic powerhouse. Lack of attention from the government, concerned stakeholders and unprofessional ways of organizing conferences were some among the challenges and problems which needs greater attention from those stake holders involved in conference tourism so as to enhance the growth of the sector. When large numbers of conference participants come to the destination, the secondary image of conference participants could positively be changed in terms of destination image, which in return, strongly builds Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination.*

**Key words:** Conference Tourism, Destination image and Destination brand

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global industries, creating significant employment and economic development, particularly in many developing countries. Over the last few decades, tourism has become one of the main sectors of the global economy, not only because of its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of different countries, but also because of the employment it generates. Currently, a growing importance is given to the event as a tourist product, which is best manifested through the new trends in the tourist supply aimed to increase the interest in learning about cultures, customs and traditions of different countries and areas. Today's events hold the central position in culture and have a very prominent role in the society. Thus, events are one of the world's leading tourist products with an unlimited potential, which is primarily associated with the maturity of destination countries with innovative planning and implementation of events and manifestations through public-private partnership (Susic & Dordevic, 2011).

Events are activities that belong to the group of created attractions. It is a continuous activity that "happens – takes place" once a year, and which promotes the tourism of a certain destination through the autonomous power of attraction of the event itself and encourages the guests to take direct participation and involvement. More importantly, in order to become a part of a tourist destination, events need to attract participants and observers who are not part of the local community (Ibid). Events are an important motivator of tourism and figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations. The roles and impacts of planned events within tourism have been well documented, and are of increasing importance for destination competitiveness.

Events, as modern and growing phenomenon based on tourism, leisure and business, are public gatherings of people with a certain intent. "Their special appeal comes partly from the limited duration and natural simplicity, which makes them different from permanent institutions and created attractions. Often, their fame and festivity atmosphere raise their importance above everyday events. They may occur in every culture and community, and a degree of interest in the contemporary society to a large extent depends on the media coverage. Most commonly, events have a relaxing character, with far less competitive and business characteristics. Events are one of the most exciting and fastest growing forms of phenomena based on leisure, business and tourism.

Branding has become a vital aspect of destination marketing practice, in an effort to effectively differentiate from competing places. Although there has been increasing levels of destination branding research during the past decade, mostly has focused on perceptions of consumers from geographically close markets. Attracting travelers from long-haul destinations involves unique challenges compared to short-haul travel (McKercher, 2008) (cited in Pike, Steven D. & Bianchi, Constanza, 2011). Previous studies have confirmed a relationship between distance and demand, and this has been denominated distance decay. To date, though, little research has explored the resultant impact of distance on destination branding performance (Ibid), and little is known regarding the role of previous visitation on long-haul destination loyalty.

The idea of destination branding is although a newer concept, but any of the resources and industry experts has been interesting towards destination brand management. Branding is a major issue in product strategy. There is hardly anything that goes unbranded. A brand is a complex symbol that can convey up to six levels of meaning, i.e. Attributes, benefits, culture, values, personality and user Jennifer A. (2001). A destination therefore is a product which depends on brand recognition, perceived, brand quality, strong mental and emotional associations and other assets. Consequently, branding focuses on the marketing of a product in terms of degree which increases brand equity (Jayswal, 2008). As cited by Maureen Atkinson in Jayswal (2008), an eminent industry agent “a brand is a type of shorthand for a product with city branding, what you try to do is create that shorthand so that when people think of your city, they automatically think of what is best about it”.

Thus, Destinations can use events to reinforce their brand. This means either mounting indigenous events, or attracting internationally mobile events, which can reinforce the destination’s brand values. Events can be powerful in anchoring, and sometimes even changing, a destination’s image.

Although the concept of branding has been applied extensively to products and services, the notion of branding has only recently started to expand into tourist destinations and became apparent as a topic of examination in the late 1990’s (Pike, 2011). Due to the fierce competition in the international tourist market and an increasing number of destinations with a developed and quality tourist offer, a relatively new trend among destination marketing organizations (DMOs) turn their destination into a brand.

Tourism in the past has been based only on the accommodation and hospitality sector, the transportation sector and entertainment sector with visitor attractions, such as, theme parks,

amusement parks, sports facilities, museums and etc. This focus diverted the minds of everyone to those areas until event organizers and event managers realized that there was an area that was yet to be tapped into and this realization gave birth to the event tourism industry. Although people had always travelled not only for leisure purposes or for relaxation, there had also been those who had travelled for entertainment and business purposes, either to a meeting, conference, workshop, event, etc. And these people or tourists had contributed to the growth of the destinations they had visited directly or indirectly, and at large, developed the event tourism industry as a whole (Etiosa, 2012). As part of an event, conference tourism plays significant roles in building a given destination's brand. As such, Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia is not far from these facts.

Currently, Addis Ababa is emerging into the limelight of conference tourism on the global stage. Reports published by various reputed international institutions described Addis Ababa as one of the city of the world which should be visited and acknowledged that it is gaining prominence from among the emerging cities of the world (found in <http://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index>, 2014). According to this index, Addis Ababa is ranked the third among cities located in middle and low-income countries to become even more important.

According to the Emerging Cities Outlook (Ibid), the 10 emerging cities that are most favorable positioned to advance over the next 10 to 20 years are Jakarta, Manila, Addis Ababa, Sao Paulo, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Bogota, Mumbai, Nairobi, and Kuala Lumpur. Besides, Addis Ababa is indeed drawing attention owing to the boom in witnessing Infrastructural development and business investment ventures. Due to the fact that, Addis Ababa is the seats of the African Union and United Nation Economic Commission for Africa, it is hosting raft of national and international organizations and becoming a hub for conference tourism in the continent of African; as well as different cultural and religious festival has been served as a sources of tourist attraction icons. Aside from this, however, the national and international tourism conferences that have been hosted at different times in Addis Ababa couldn't bring paramount results in building Addis Ababa's destination brand.

Thus, the main aim of this study is to assess conference tourism in building the Ethiopia's image in general and Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination from stakeholders and international conference participant's perspective in particular. In doing so, it tried to identify some opportunities of conference tourism along with the challenges that Addis Ababa faced in hosting various international conferences being the hub of international and continental diplomatic arena.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The conference is a newly emerging niche market in the rapidly growing tourism industry that largely contributes to the economic development of countries across the globe. Apart from its economic contribution, conference tourism can develop strong, unique and competitive destination brands; hence, many tourist organizations spend lots of money on selling their country around the world (Suzan and Mohammed, ND). Furthermore, Klooster (2004) stated that branding is the pragmatic solution for tourist destination as a tiny part of the country which are aggressively promoted have a disproportionate effect on people's perceptions of the country as a whole (cited in Suzan and Mohammed, ND).

Albeit the negative image labeled, whether stereotypically, on Ethiopia over the past years has been getting revitalized, destination branding and marketing is not currently getting enough attention yet in the country (MoCT, 2012). Pointing out the increment of the event as a significant component of destination branding, Trošt et al (2012) stated that because of the fierce competition in the international tourist market and an increasing number of destinations with a developed and quality tourist offer, a relatively new trend among destination marketing organizations (DMOs) turn their destination into a brand.

Ethiopia's comparative advantage as a tourism destination is based on offering a safe, unspoiled and relatively unexplored "Africa in one country" experience, with Addis Ababa serving as a diplomatic capital and regional hub for air transport, while the country itself offers attractive complementarities with neighboring and well-marketed destinations such as Kenya and Tanzania (MoCT, 2012). The growth of MICE, coupled with its contribution to destination brand building, has shifted the perceptions of tourism marketing globally. Granted, with these advantages, however, there is a common feeling that Ethiopia has not been able to capitalize this opportunity to that extent. In other words, with all the opportunities, the country could build its brand through conference tourism to convey the expectations of memorable travel experience which is distinctively associated with the destination. Nevertheless, there are challenges that hinder the country to develop event portfolios, including the promising new business of tourism, Conference, to attract tourists, to sell the destination and to reinforce its brand world widely.

Thus, this study gone through assessing the role of conference tourism, which is one of the comparative advantages of Ethiopia's tourist market, in building Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination. It's also gone some way to identify the perceptions that the international conference participants have about of the country, challenges and opportunities along with the involvement of concerned stakeholders to capitalize the conference tourism in building the brand

of Ethiopia at large and of Addis Ababa in particular. Besides, an attempt was made to consolidate facts from different literatures and contributed something to narrow the gap that exists concerning the salient issue under study.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In carrying out the study, an attempt was made in two major areas: Conference tourism and destination brand. Based on these, one research question with underlying sub questions has, therefore, been proposed:

- I. How can Conference Tourism build Addis Ababa's brand destination?
  - I. How do stakeholders take part in capitalizing the impacts of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand?
  - II. What are the opportunities of conference tourism to make Addis Ababa as a conference destination?
  - III. What are the challenges that hamper the contribution of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination?
  - IV. What are the primary and secondary International Conference participants' image regarding Addis Ababa as a conference destination?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives: general and specific objectives

#### **1.4.1 General objective:**

The main objective of the study was to assess the role of conference tourism in building Ethiopia's image in general and Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination in particular.

#### **1.4.2 Specific objectives:**

- I. To map out the stakeholders involvement in capitalizing the impacts of conference on image formation of Addis Ababa's destination brand.
- II. To figure out the opportunities of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand destination.
- III. To reveal the challenges that hinder conference tourism not to contribute soundly to Addis Ababa' image formation.
- IV. To uncover both primary and secondary international Conference participants' image of Addis Ababa as a conference destination.

### **1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

Focusing on the assessment of the role of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's destination brand along with the identification of challenges and opportunities of conference tourism and also the involvement of concerned stakeholders, the study area was delimited to Addis Ababa city administration targeting on 396 international conference participants. Quantitative and qualitative approaches in descriptive research method were employed to conduct this study which lasted for seven months starting from 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2014 - 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study will contribute relevant information for tourism policy makers, academicians of tourism & hospitality sectors, destination marketers and promotion companies regarding conference tourism and its role in building the brand destination of Addis Ababa city. Besides, the researcher is highly interested in acquiring a practical experience for his academic study and further developing his personal and professional marketing skills in a new tourism environment. In other words, the researcher strongly believes that one's adaptability skills to new situations, from both personal and professional point of view, is a must in today's world, as there is a strong globalization trend and conference tourism is highly appreciated elsewhere. Moreover, the study significantly contributes to a greater understanding of perception and travel information for tourism intermediaries, including hospitality establishments, tour operators, event organizers and other conference facility providers. Most importantly, the study will serve as a springboard for other researchers to undertake further researches in the same area.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Tourism:** is people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. (UNWTO, 1995).

**Destination:** the place to which someone or something is going or being sent for different purposes or a place where people will make a special trip to visit. (Pike, 2008).

**Destination image:** The sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has about a given destination. (Crompton, 1979).

**Destination marketing:** promoting a town, city, region, or country in order to increase the number of visitors. It promotes the development and marketing of a destination, focusing on convention sales, tourism marketing, and services. (Kotler, 2006)

**Tourism destination marketing:** the management process through which the National Tourist Organizations and/or tourist enterprises identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and

dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels, and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objectives. (Ibid).

**Brand:** A unique design, sign, symbol, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors. (Keller 1993).

**Brand destination:** a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination, furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination so as to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience.(Blain,2005).

**Event:** Something that occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time or it is an occurrence happening at a determinable time and place, with or without the participation of human agents. (Luckham, S. 2008).

**Event Tourism:** is a systematic planning, development, and marketing of festivals and special events as tourist attractions, image-makers, catalysts for infrastructure and economic growth, and animators of built attraction. (D. Getz, 2008).

**Tourism stakeholders:** a complex network of groups that have an interest in the development, management and marketing of tourism for a particular destination (the media, tour operation companies, travel agencies, car rental companies, airline companies, event organizers, hotels, professional tourism associations, government tourism bodies & etc.). The support, commitment and cooperation of these stakeholders in tourism in a destination are essential for the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry. (Jamal, G. 1995).

**MICE:** is an acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. It refers to a specialized niche of group tourism dedicated to planning, booking and facilitating conferences, seminars and other events. (Dwyer, P. (2001).

**MICE Tourism:** is a type of tourism in which large groups, usually planned well in advance, are brought together for a particular purpose. (Fenich, 2005).

**Conference:** A conference is a symposium, seminar, workshop, or any other organized and formal meeting, whether conducted face-to-face or via the Internet, where individuals assemble (or meet virtually) to exchange information and views or explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge, whether or not a published report results of such meeting.

([http://www.hhs.gov/asfr/ogapa/acquisition/appfundspol\\_att1.html](http://www.hhs.gov/asfr/ogapa/acquisition/appfundspol_att1.html)).

**Conference Tourism:** is one type of event undertaken by a group of individuals by travelling long miles within/ outside of their home country to another destination to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate or give publicity to some area of opinion on a specific issue. (WTC, 2007).

**Primary image:** the image that conference participants have about a given destination after physically coming and experiencing the true image of the destination/country. (Chon, 1990).

**Secondary image:** the image that conference participants gained from different secondary sources of information before physically coming and experiencing the true image of the destination/country. (Ibid).

### 1.8 Structure of the study

The paper is organized under five chapters. The first chapter provided general information on the introduction about the study. In this part, background of the study, statement of research problem, objective of the study, the significance of the study will be included.

The second chapter outlined the review of different literatures related to areas under study. It consisted of definition of terms and concepts about event tourism and destination brand.

Chapter three dealt with study area, describing the background of the study area, sampling technique, data source and data collection instrument, method of data analysis and chapter four was about verifying data for analysis and interpretation of the research findings that accompanied by chapter five dealt with summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

#### 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter tries to introduce the notion of Tourism, destination image and destination branding by reviewing related literatures from different sources so as to relate it with the study that will be undertaken.

#### 2.2 The Notion of Tourism, Destination Image and Destination Branding

##### 2.2.1 The notion of Tourism

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global industries. It is a vibrant in creating significant employment and economic development, particularly in many developing countries. Over the last few decades, tourism has become one of the main sectors of the global economy, not only because of its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of different countries, but also because of the employment it generates (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill 2008). So far, many definitions of tourism have emerged as a result of the growth and changes of tourism-related activities, but there is one simple definition that has been accepted for a long time now: It is a temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work or residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs (Ibid). More importantly, the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004) defines tourism as “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (Ibid). Moreover, in 1981 (after the definition adopted by the League of Nations in 1937), the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST) stated: “Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities, selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stays away from home” (De Groote, 1995:28).

In 1973 the National Tourism Resources Review Commission provided more specific definition for tourism as “A tourism is one who travels away from home for a distance of at least 50 miles (one way) for business, pleasure, personal affairs, or any other purpose except to commute to work, whether he/she stays overnight or returns the same day” (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1998, pp. 11-12). There are many forms of tourism enjoyed throughout the world from the sun, surf and sand (3S) tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, sport tourism, health and spa tourism, cruise tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, festivals, family reunions and business/convention tourism (Ibid).

According to Mill (1990) tourism is not an industry itself, but it contributes to a range of other industries. Tourism is an activity engaged in by people who travel. For many countries tourism is the number one commodity in the international trade market (Mill 1990).

In countries those endowed with significant tourist attractions, tourism has emerged as a new impetus for economic growth because its ability to generate foreign exchange and employment. A concise analysis of the economic impact of tourism for a developing country is important to guide the policy intended to develop tourism and augment its benefit on the economy (Dwyer and Forsyth, 1993). Tourism impacts on the economy through tourist's expenditure on different (mostly non-traded) goods and services (Hazari and Sgro, 1995:243). Thus, the tourist expenditures may be regarded as an inflow of foreign exchange that can lead to an appreciation of the exchange rate, hence reduction of the domestic price of exports, which acts as a disincentive to exporters. More generally, the economic impact of tourism can be examined by analyzing its impact on the growth of production, use of the factors of production or on the country's balance of payments (Miki ć, 1988: 302). Tourism is a phenomenon that warrants investigation due to its impacts economically and socially to a region or country. Certain areas of tourism remain under investigated, including the meetings, conventions, conference, expositions and incentives (MICE) tourism (Mill 1990).

### **2.2.2 Destination and Destination image**

According to Moilanen and Rainisto, the concept of destination is very broad. They argued that a destination can be everything that people visit for a one day trip, a shorter stay or a longer holiday. In addition, destinations can be owned, at one end of the scale, by a single company whereas destinations, at the other end of that scale, are constituted by countries or regions (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009). Destinations are places that attract visitors for a temporary stay, and range from continents to countries to states and provinces to the cities to villages to purpose built resort areas (Pike, 2004). At the foundation level, destinations are essentially communities based on local government boundaries. The UNWTO (2000) offered the following working definition of a "local tourism destination": A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community and can nest and network to form larger destinations. This definition of the UNWTO is also supported by Buhalis who argues that destinations "are considered to be a

defined geographical region, which is understood by its visitors as a unique entity, with a political and legislative framework for tourism marketing and planning. This definition enables Destination Management Organizations to be accountable for the planning and marketing of the region and to have the power and resources to undertake action towards achieving its strategic objectives” (Buhalis 1999). Destinations are places with some form of actual or perceived boundary, such as the physical boundary of an island, political boundaries, or even market-created boundaries (Kotler et al., 2006). Destinations may not welcome tourists uniformly. Due to location, climate, limited resources, size, and cultural heritage, some places have few economic choices other than to participate in tourism. The desire to become a recognized destination presents a difficult marketing challenge. In this regard, the image that a destination transmits to the market becomes one of the most elements which influence tourists the when choosing a tourist destination (UNWTO, 2000).

Crompton (1979) defined image as the sum of the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has about a destination. With the same talk about, Echtner and Richie (1993) described destination image as “perceptions of an area” or “impressions of a place”. On the other hand, Alcaniz, Garcia, & Blas, (2009) pointed out that the perceptions of the destination attribute of its image. Thus, the image is the intangible picture of a destination involved tourist’s knowledge and feeling towards it. With this assumption, Gunn (1972) conceptualized tourist destination image into two stages; the organic image and the induced image. Fake and Crompton (1991) introduced the “complex image” which is formed when a tourist has actually experienced the destination. In addition, Gartner (1993) introduced three components of destination image: cognitive image which is formulated from external stimuli, the affective image refers to the person’s feeling and evaluation of a destination, and the conative image refers to the person’s behavior resulted from cognitive and affective components. The importance of destination image emerges from its influence on the tourist behavior; the destinations that have stronger images have a higher possibility of being chosen by tourists (Jayswal, 2008).

Every place has its own image, either negative or positive. People have an image of countries that can be brought forth by simply saying their names. A country’s image can be formed from many sources (Kotler and Gertner, 2004) among other things it results from a country’s geography, history, proclamations, art and music and famous citizens. The entertainment industry and the media play a large part when it comes to shaping people’s perceptions of countries, especially those viewed negatively (Ibid). People routinely use these perceptions to make sense of the world around them by associating them with, for example, objects, events, experiences, products and

persons (Ibid). The image of a country is likely to influence people's decisions related to purchasing products, investing in, changing residence and travelling to that country (Ibid).

The tourist destination comprises a number of elements which in combination attract visitors to stay for a holiday (Lumsdon, 1997). Crouch and Ritchie (1999) divide destinations' core resources and attractors into six categories, physiography (overall nature of the landscape, the climate and visual appeal of the destination), culture and history, market ties, activities, special events and tourism superstructure. However, Lumsdon (1997) divides destinations into four core elements, which are prime attractors, built environment, supporting supply services and atmosphere. Let's look at Lumsdon's (1997) categorization in more detail.

First, the Prime attractions are the main attractions which appeal to the visitor and differentiate one destination from another. Prime attraction can be natural or man-made. Examples of main attractors are the Acropolis in Athens, the pyramids in Egypt, the Niagara Falls in the USA and the Taj Mahal in India.

The built environment is the second, which comprises the physical layout of a destination and includes waterfronts, promenades, historic quarters and commercial zones. Major elements of infrastructure such as road and rail networks, open spaces and communal facilities are also part of this category. Examples of built environments are the Boston Waterfront, the London Docklands, the Venetian Canals and the Roman Quarter in Paris.

The third categories are, according to Lumsden 1997, Supporting supply services. These are essential at all destinations that are facilitating services such as accommodation, communications, transport, restaurants, entertainment and amenities.

The fourth category, the socio-cultural dimensions of atmosphere and ambiance make up the cultural attributes of a destination. These attributes are the bridges between past and present, the mood, ranging from sleepy to vibrate and the degree of friendliness and cohesion between the host community and visitors. Architectural style, natural setting, how local building materials are used, cultural diversity, social values, and public environments are also part of these cultural attributes and have been referred to as the sense of place. Examples of the socio-cultural dimension are the chaotic traffic of Delhi in India, the salsa music of La Habana, Cuba and the friendliness of the Greek islands (Ibid). The socio-cultural elements must be authentic. It can have a negative effect on the tourists' experience with the destination if they see them as being staged. It's evident that new sophisticated consumers seek authentic and unique experiences (Ibid).

Ethiopia has much to offer international tourists. It is a land of natural contrasts, ranging from the peaks of the rugged Simien Mountains to the depths of the Danakil Depression, lowest points on earth. Ethiopia's natural beauty includes a varied abundance of landscapes, including Afro-Alpine highlands, moors, mountains, deep gorges, the largest cave in Africa (Sof Omar), the Great Rift Valley, tropical forests, whitewater rivers, savannahs, giant waterfalls and volcanic hot springs. Moreover, Ethiopia sits near the equator; its climate is tempered by altitude, creating an idyllic springlike climate throughout the year for most of its regions. Generally, the combination of attractions in Ethiopia includes a wealth of historical, cultural, archaeological and anthropological sites, as well as numerous areas rich in wildlife (<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org>).

Ethiopia's main tourist destinations are situated on the northern tourist circuit known as the "historic route." This encompasses the historical and cultural sites of Bahir Dar, Gondar, Axum, and Lalibela. Other main attractions include the wildlife centers along the Great Rift Valley in the southwest, and the historic area of Harar in the east. While Ethiopia's various attractions and mix of people and cultures give it great potential for anthropological and educational tourism, photo and hunting safaris, bird watching, water sports, desert trekking, mountain hiking, camping and general Eco-tourism. Another area with great growth potential is conference tourism. Addis Ababa – the nation's capital, principal gateway and business center and conference tourism is also a major destination in its own right. However, this conference tourism has failed to give Addis Ababa a branded conference destination even if it is the capital city of Africa and the seat of Economic commission for Africa in which various conferences have been held on different issues throughout the year. Thus, this study seeks to assess the potentiality and role that conference tourism plays in building Addis Ababa's destination branding at the global conference center.

### **2.2.3 The nature of destination and destination marketing**

Destination marketing is an integral part of developing and retaining a particular location's popularity. Too often, however, tourism planners focus only on destination developments without paying attention to retaining and preserving the attributes that attracted travelers to the destination in the first place (Kotler et al., 2006).

Place marketing is a phenomenon as local community engaging local authorities, entrepreneurs and residents, plans and implements marketing activities to improve the attractiveness of the place for the different target groups (e.g. For residents, enterprises, investigators, visitors). According to Rainisto (2003), Place marketing is the designing and developing a place in the way that satisfies the need of the target segments. As a result, Place marketing is succeeded if residents and

enterprises are happy and satisfied and expectations of visitors and investors are met (Kotler et al. 1993).

Recently, there has been a shift towards branding in the literature of place marketing Karavatzis (2005) which was also strengthened by Skinner (2008) that place marketing is turned into place branding. The difference of those two terms: “place marketing“ is more concerned with overall management issues in coordination and integration of all of the elements of the destination mix in a particular geographic area based upon a defined tourism strategy and plan (Mill and Morrison, 2012). Accordingly, the destination mix elements are the attractions and events, facilities (hotels, restaurants, etc.), Transportation, infrastructure, and hospitality resources. In addition, destination management encompasses the image-making, branding, and marketing and communications of all that the place has to offer to tourists (Ibid). And the term “place branding” is more linked to a place’s promotional activity, creating a distinct identity in the minds of the various target groups (Ibid).

#### **2.2.4 Destination Branding**

Destination branding is an instrumental and business oriented approach in so far that the place is seen as a resource and the brand as a tool to tap it in order to gain market advantages. However, it is also a discipline which addresses issues of place identity. The activity of promoting in tourism has been termed as destination branding, placement, promotion, tourism, destination branding, destination marketing, etc. Morgan and Pritchard argue that place, promotion can be defined as “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographic localities or areas to a target audience” (Morgan & Pritchard 2007). This view correlates well with Buhalis’s above thoughts that a destination must be clearly defined in order for it to be promoted. Fan argues that "place branding is a component of tourism marketing. It is also called destination marketing and promotes a place not just for visits and tourism, but also for inward investment, job creation and settlement" (Fan 2006).

Moreover, the American Marketing Association (2011) defines a brand as “a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas; often, it refers to a symbol such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme”. Hence, the concept of a brand generally refers to the recognition of a name, including the reputation affiliated with the promise of authenticity and quality, and the differentiation to other product offerings in a competitive market (Anholt 2007)

The advantage of creating and maintaining a place brand is that it can be used as a means for differentiation in a global competitive environment, to stakeholders both visiting and living there.

The place brand identity can be visually and verbally communicated to stakeholders through a logo and advertisements; for instance, the city brand name of New York is expressed in the logo and slogan “I ♥ NY”. Another advantage of applying branding concepts to places is that it could facilitate reputation building and boost their brand equity. A brand is thus more than a static component.

A place brand may be equivalent to the identity of the location itself (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005). Since the image of a place brand is formed as a collection of associations in the audience’s minds (Anholt 2007), it may not always coincide with the actual place identity. Through the conceptualization of brand relationships the place brand can deliver emotional aspects to stakeholders through its behavior, e.g. “Event-based strategies” mega-events and cultural regeneration” (Kavaratzis 2004).

Hence, “place branding, reflects the growing interest in the ways that communities, cities, regions and countries market their entity” (Merrilees et al. 2009). They can thus “act as umbrella brands in a portfolio of leisure, investment and business tourism, and stakeholder and citizen welfare products” (Trueman et al. 2004). However, Freire (2005, as cited in Freire 2009) goes so far as to argue that “place will function as a brand even if not managed under a branding conceptual framework” because they are embedded with meaning a view. For instance, for some place brands, such as London or Paris, which do not have an officially created brand, most people still recognize their names and have formed certain images and associations around them (Codato & Franco 2006).

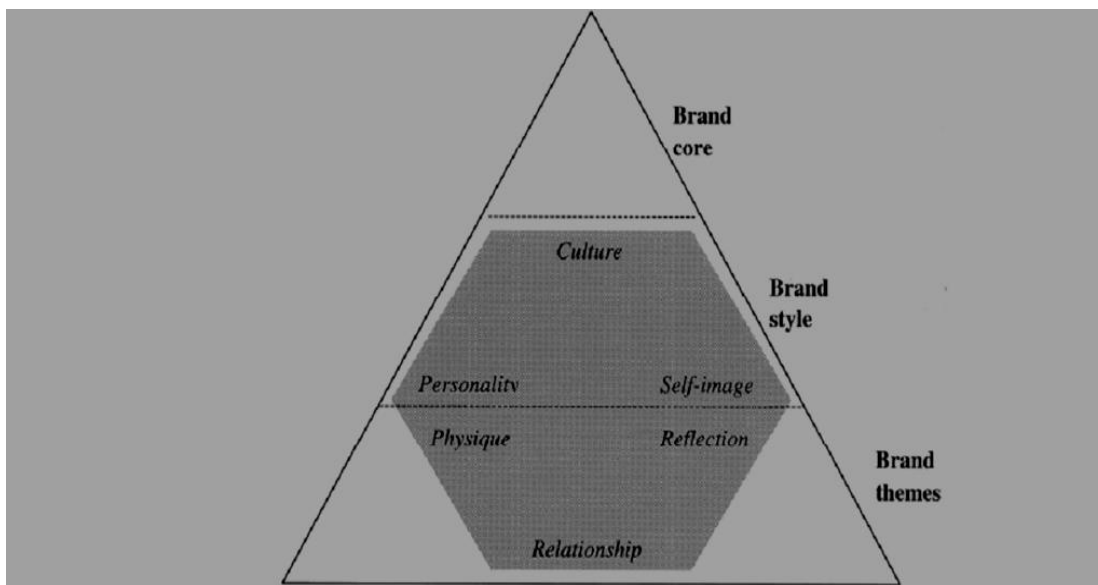
As pointed out in above sections, 2.2.2 and 2.2.4, the general concepts of destination brand and destination image can create a kind of confusion. For this reason, it is important to make a clear distinction between brand and image, as these notions are often used interchangeably in destination branding theory and are hard to separate. First of all, image, as defined above, is “the sum of the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination” (Crompton, 1979). Morgan & Pritchard argue that a the image of a country derives from factors such as geography, history, culture, famous people and other factors that may or may not be influencing the perceptions of the country (Morgan & Pritchard 2007). When venturing further into the distinction between image and brand it becomes obvious that the two concepts are co-dependent. This is substantiated by Kozak and Tashi who argued that “a brand can be put together as a concrete identity for a destination through marketing, including components of a name along with a simplified yet strong and favorable image, a logo and a catch phrase. This identity is communicated by the destination through marketing programs, and it provides consumers a sense

of value, stability, consistency, trust, and uniqueness, thus inducing consumer loyalty in the end” (Kozak & Taschi 2006). As it appears, they establish that a destination image can be used as part of a brand. However, Anholt argues that there is a clear distinction between brand identity and brand image. Brand identity should be understood as being defined by the sender (in this case the DMO) whereas brand image primarily exists in the mind of the consumer. Therefore, the brand identity is primarily concerned with the messages around identity and core characteristics that the DMO is conveying. This is different from brand image which deals with individual perceptions from potential receivers (Anholt 2007). Ideally, brand identity is how the DMO wants the brand to be experienced, whereas brand image is concerned with how the brand is being understood in reality.

Destination brander may assert the destinations personality through the brand pyramid. Kapferer (1995) argues that in order to manage a brand through time, and to sustain and ensure its long-term success, it is vital to analyze it as a three-tier pyramid (see figure 1).

The brand pyramid model is used by many organizations and destinations that wishes to summarize their brand, and as guidance in the brand building process. The top of the pyramid represents the focal point of the brand, the foundation from which the brand appears to speak and act. This is the deep identity of the brand, its core value, and it must be known, but must remain unspoken and invisible (Kapferer, 1995). This makes it permanent over a long period. The unconscious must remain hidden behind product arguments to be effective.

The middle of the pyramid represents the style and codes of the brand. The style of transmitting a brand’s message in words and images is an expression of the brand’s core identity. Style should as such therefore not be random, but always considered in relation to the brand’s deep identity (Ibid). The identity actually only becomes apparent during a progression of change. The lower stage of the pyramid conveys the communications themes, meaning the present advertising positioning of the brand.



Source: Kapferer (1995)

Fig 1: The brand pyramid and the identity prism,

Customers view the brand bottom-up. They discover it by its products, its themes and positioning, and the style of its communication. In terms of brand management, in order to build a sustainable and long-lasting brand, it is required that there is a clear understanding of the brand's core and focal point. This works top-down: the style and style changes should not deceive the core identity of the brand. The communication subjects and promises must fall within the brand's genuine field (Kapferer, 1995). The three-tier pyramidal model is also important in managing international brands. The brand is often at different stages of development in different countries why its products and advertising themes are not standardized throughout the world. The important thing is that the same core value and style should be universally presented.

### 2.3 Event Tourism

The term 'event tourism' was not widely used, prior to 1987. When The New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department (1987) reported: "Event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism". An article by Getz in 1989 in *Tourism Management* developed a framework for planning 'events tourism'. Prior to this it was normal to speak of special events, hallmark events, mega events and specific types of events.

Table 1: The Impacts of Event Tourism

Type Of impact	Positive	Negative
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased expenditures</li> <li>▪ Creation of employment</li> <li>▪ Increase in labor supply</li> <li>▪ Increase in standard of living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Price increase during event</li> <li>▪ Real estate speculation</li> <li>▪ Failure to attract tourists</li> <li>▪ Better alternative investments</li> <li>▪ Inadequate capital</li> <li>▪ Inadequate estimation of costs of event</li> </ul>
Tourism/Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased awareness of the region as a travel/tourism destination</li> <li>▪ Increased knowledge concerning the potential for investment and commercial activity in the region</li> <li>▪ Creation of new accommodation and tourist attractions</li> <li>▪ Increase in accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acquisition of a poor reputation as a result of inadequate facility's improper practices of inflated prices</li> <li>▪ Negative reaction from existing enterprises due to the possibility of new competition for local manpower and government assistance</li> </ul>
Physical/environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in permanent level of local interest and participation in types of activity associated with the event</li> <li>▪ Strengthening of regional values and traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commercialization of activities which may be of a personal or private nature</li> <li>Modification of the nature of the event or activity to accommodate tourism</li> <li>▪ Potential increase in crime</li> <li>▪ Changes in community structure</li> <li>▪ Social dislocation</li> </ul>
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased local pride and community spirit</li> <li>▪ Increased awareness of non-local perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tendency toward defensive attitudes concerning the host region</li> <li>▪ Culture shock</li> <li>▪ A misunderstanding leads to varying degrees of host/visitor hostility</li> </ul>
Political/administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhanced international recognition of region and values</li> <li>▪ Development of skills among planners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic exploitation of the local population to satisfy the ambitions of the political elite</li> <li>▪ Distortion of the true nature of the event to reflect elite values</li> <li>▪ Inability to achieve aims</li> <li>▪ Increase in administrative costs</li> </ul>

Source: Hall Janeczko (1992)

Now 'event tourism' is generally recognized as being inclusive of all planned events in an integrated approach to development and marketing (Getz, 1989).

Event Tourism is a systematic planning, development, and marketing of festivals and special events as tourist attractions, image-makers, catalysts for infrastructure and economic growth, and animators of built attraction (Ghazali, cited in Collins and Minnis, 2007). According to Donald Getz (2007), tourism management deals with tourism development based on analyzing the behavior and motivation of all kinds of tourists. On the other hand, event management deals with event marketing, design and managing of an event. Moreover, it tries to understand the event experiences and to manage them. Hence, event tourism is in the middle of the two sectors. In other words, event tourism aims at full exploitation of the capabilities of events in order to achieve tourism development of host communities. Event tourism planners must take into account all the details of event management and make a sedulous research on managing event from the tourism perspective. Mules and Ritchie, 2002, discussed the impact of event tourism on the economy, tourism/commerce, physical/environment, psychology and political/administrative in the briefest manner (see table 1 above)

## **2.4 Challenges and Opportunities of Event Tourism**

### **2.4.1 Challenges of Event Tourism**

Regardless of event tourism, Payne (1995) divided the challenges and problems related to multi project management while hosting an Event Tourism summarized in the 5C's: capacity, conflicts, commitment, context and complexity (see table 2 below).

Furthermore, Payne indicated that the coordination of events in destinations can be looked upon two different perspectives. According to these perspectives, first, one can talk about internal coordination within the tourism organization and the problems and challenges that are related to the events it is involved in and the Second is the coordination of events, or the lack of it, can also be related to all the events that take place in destinations and in which tourism organizations may play little role.

Table 2: Challenges of Event Tourism

<b>Challenges of Event Tourism</b> <b>5 C's by Payne (1995)</b>	<b>Examples of Multi event Management Problems for Tourism Organization and Destinations</b>
Context	Event organizers take advantage of the lack of coordination in relation to finance provided by the city (Helsinki) Total independence and overlapping of events in a destination (Copenhagen)
Commitment	The city is not committed to event tourism (Helsinki) Tourism organization is not committed to all kinds of events (Copenhagen)
Capacity	Tourism organization does not have the ability to coordinate resources to events (Helsinki)
Conflicts	Different interests of the city and tourism organization in relation to event tourism (Helsinki) Different interests that originate from public-private ownership of tourism organizations (Copenhagen)
Complexity	Lack of communication and flow of information between city offices that provide financial aid to events (Helsinki)

Source: Payne, J. (1995). Management of multiple simultaneous projects

#### 2.4.2 Opportunities of Event Tourism

Even though Payne indicated and summarized the challenges of event tourism into the 5c's, however, the empirical findings of Getz, (1997) indicated that the studied tourism organizations have understood the importance of events for destinations in which organizations should pay more attention to the use of events in their operations during the recent years and in all the cases, he pointed out, event tourism increases the attractiveness of the destinations to both the tourists and local people that results economic and social benefits for the community of the destination (Ibid). Furthermore, Erfurt & Johnsen, (2003) stated the benefits of event tourism as increasing the media coverage and publicity as such; it enhances the image of the destinations. (Mossberg, 2000). Besides of this, the most important benefit of event tourism was pointed out by Bohlin (sited in Mossberg, 2000). According to him, events create a lot of added value for destinations in

generating repeat visits. In addition, Getz (1997) added the role of event tourism as catalyst in stimulating infrastructure and increase job opportunities.

More importantly, event tourism can be seen as a means of livening up the city during the dark wintertime (during the lean or off-season) which is related to the seasonality problems of tourist destinations. As a result, event tourism plays significant roles for the destinations apart from the seasonality problems enabling the destinations to host various conferences. (Moutinho, 2000).

## **2.5 Stakeholder involvement in Event Tourism**

Tourism organizations have an ownership structure that gathers many important actors around the same table for cooperation as a main competitive tool that permeates the work with events (Göteborg&Co, 2003). According to Vallentin (ND), Private businesses tend to adopt an ad hoc approach, and only be interested in the short-term gains of individual events and the role of the state in relation to the work with events bring huge opportunities in many countries national subsidies and guarantees are given in order to ensure city and country win big international events. However, Vallentin described that the biggest challenge for Copenhagen Eventures in relation to events is to get the attention and the funding from the politicians. In addition to these, he pointed out how media attention is important in order to get the authorities to increasingly realize the potential of events.

Moreover, the cooperation within the tourism industry is important and the organization is also actively collaborating with event venues and event organizers in the city (Ibid). Furthermore, Limnefelt (041014) strengthened this idea by emphasizing on the importance of the Cooperation with different operators within the tourism industry such as private event organizers by pointing out how the cooperation with all the different tourism actors is important, if the destination is to develop its tourism products and services. In addition, he highlights the important role of the intermediaries, such as travel agencies, tour operators, event organizers, journalists and the Internet in which it is important to cooperate with the right people in right organizations.

## **2.6 MICE Tourism**

The MICE tourism, more specific compared to event tourism, (Meetings, Incentive travels, Conferences, and Exhibitions) has been described as a new segment of the tourism industry; a new type of tourism arising out of the increase in the number of conventions and exhibitions; the fastest growing segment and most lucrative sector of the travel and tourism industry (Oppermann, 1996; Ruzic, Turkalj, & Racic, 2003; Wang & Wang, 2008). However, meetings and gatherings of people have taken place since the early days of civilization. Accordingly, archaeologists have

found primitive ruins that were used for specific gathering places by ancient tribes to discuss many topics including: hunting plans, wartime activities, crop harvesting, or the planning of community celebrations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

Today, cities and more specifically hotels and resorts, have become a popular choice for meetings or conventions. The hospitality industry has recognized the importance of meetings, conventions and expositions to their financial well-being and has been soliciting corporations, associations and academic institutions as clients for many years now (Ibid). A meeting is “a conference, workshop, seminar, or other event designed to bring people together for the purpose of exchanging information” (Ibid). Most often, conferences and conventions are an important component of travel and tourism in a region (Grado et al., 1998).

MICE tourism has profound benefits which can be recognized, among others, its contribution to: employment and income in a region, the generation of investment in tourism/recreation infrastructure, the support of the formation of relationships between firms, the upholding of national interest and international cooperation, the allowance for training and educational opportunities, the facilitation of the exchange of new ideas and technology, the establishment of valuable scientific, business, professional and social contacts, and the promotion of a country or region as brand destination for travel (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997).

The different events described above have one thing in common: they are all to do with bringing people together, face-to-face, to exchange ideas and information, to discuss and in some cases negotiate, to build friendships and closer business relationships, to encourage better performance by individuals and organizations. They are different facets of the same dynamic, international, economically vibrant conference industry. The terms used (summit, meeting, conference, assembly, convention, congress, briefing, training, incentive) may vary, and the events themselves may have different formats and emphases, but the essential ingredients and objectives are the same( Rogers, 2008).Conference, the core of this study, is at the forefront of modern communications, whether this is for internal communications (sales meetings, training seminars, board retreats, major annual conferences,

for example) or as a vehicle for communicating with key audiences (such as press briefings, product launches, annual meetings, some technical conferences. Conferences are a generic term to describe a diverse mix of communications events (Ibid).

## 2.7 Conference Tourism

According to Weber and Chon, (2002) the human desire to meet and exchange ideas, the basis of conventions and meetings to discuss cultural, political and commercial matters have been held since ancient times, as old as humankind as evidenced by the archaeological remains of ancient meeting sites in Athens and the Forum in Rome. With the initiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the formation of the European Union, only two major milestones that positively affected the meetings industry may be named. As a result, international business travel increased significantly (Astroff & Abbey, 2006) providing new demand for national and international meetings.

The meetings industry in its current form operates on a global scale, generates billions of dollars through delegate expenditure, contributes to national and regional economies through investment, construction and generation of employment, and amounts to economic powerhouse (Ford 2008). The rapid expansion of the international conference industry, particularly in the last decade, is due to a number of factors. As Spiller noted that, in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the increase in the need for meetings between business leaders and entrepreneurs was coupled with advances in transportation, and an increase in disposable incomes, which led to a more mobile society and enabled travel to meetings (Spiller, 2002). According to UNWTO (2006), the meeting industry has therefore emerged over recent decades as an important Contributor to national economies and is perceived as a significant and growing component of tourism.

Moreover, globalization in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century fuelled a further increase in demand for international meetings driven by several factors (Weber and Ladkin, 2003): the increase in the number of international corporations, leading to an increase in business being undertaken outside the home country and a corresponding rise in the need for international meetings; the development of the knowledge economy leading to an increased need for updates and transfer of knowledge, most effectively and efficiently carried out through meetings (Ibid). Besides, the corresponding establishment of a growing number of associations with international memberships requiring international meetings and the need for service and product launches requiring face-to-face meetings and as a result, increased demand for international meetings, the destinations are motivated to invest heavily in infrastructure development (Ladkin, 2006).

Even though the meetings industry is least responsive of all tourism sectors to price changes and 'peak-trough' seasonal patterns, it is regarded as a very attractive sector of the industry (Oppermann, 1996). More importantly, conference tourism has the potential to lead to increase the use of the destination for leisure tourism, with delegates possibly being motivated to return to the country, or extend their business trips, and to recommend it to others (Rogers, 2003). Business

travelers are often perceived as constituting the high quality, high yield tourism sector; tourism authorities around the world are keen to attract convention visitors to their destination, thereby also adding a prestigious element to the destination's image (Weber and Chon, 2002).

The conference industry is highly complex, comprising a multiplicity of buyer and supplier organizations and businesses (Rogers, 2003). The buyers can be seen to be the organization (be it corporate, association, or government/public), and the delegates (the ultimate buyers or end-consumers of the conference product (Davidson and Rogers, 2006). The suppliers, those who supply the products, facilities and services necessary for a meeting to operate effectively, include venues, accommodation providers, caterers, transportation suppliers, technical service suppliers and numerous others. According to Blinnikka & Kuha (2004), all the services that are offered for conference tourists form a service package, consists of tangible and intangible elements. The tangible elements are: physical elements such as a conference room and equipment enable delivering the message, the core product, more easily and effectively. Intangible elements such as experiences, services and quality are important elements in the today's conference industry. Whereas, Scandichotels (2012) stated about the importance of selecting the right place of holding a conference & Conference facilities have special requirements according to the purpose and the size of the conference, but the main elements should be found in every conference facility. Accordingly, the main elements are AV technique, wireless and fixed-line Internet, papers and pencils, Flipchart, whiteboard, LCD projector, overhead projector and name tags (Ibid).

In addition, conference refreshments and servings are a part of a well-organized conference. Customer service and conference host or hostess in a conference center are a good way of increasing the value for the customer and create a professional image. Conference host or hostess may welcome the guests and introduce the facilities for conference organizers and also help with technical and other issues (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004).

Apart from this, Continental ranking of conference tourism puts Europe and Asia as the leaders while North America and Africa follow suit. This has accelerated change and economic growth and more importantly the product development to embrace emerging needs and thus making the (tourism) sector the 29<sup>th</sup> largest contributor to the gross national product globally (Wekesa, 2006). Within Africa, South Africa has been the most popular in hosting meetings in the African continent, followed by Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. Kenya takes the 4th position. City wise, Nairobi ranked 5th after Cape Town, Durban, Cairo and Johannesburg (Victoria Safaris, 2007). However, the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA, 2013) has ranked world countries based on the number of international association meetings in the year 2013 (see appendix) and on this ranking, top 11 African Countries are (South Africa 34<sup>th</sup>, Kenya 38<sup>th</sup>,

Morocco 61<sup>th</sup>, Tunisia 71<sup>th</sup>, Egypt 74<sup>th</sup>, Ghana 74<sup>th</sup>, Nigeria 83<sup>th</sup>, Tanzania 83<sup>th</sup>, Uganda 83<sup>th</sup>, Senegal 88<sup>th</sup> and Ethiopia 93<sup>th</sup> from countries of the world. In the same issues, ICCA ranked the African cities based on the number of conferences they hosted and by this ranking, Addis Ababa was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> by hosting only 8 international conferences out of 23 African cities listed by ICCA in 2013. This shows that how much conference tourism is at an infant stage in Africa continent in general and in Ethiopia in particular even though Addis Ababa is the seat of the AU and UNECA.

It should be noted that ICCA rankings are based purely on the number of meetings that meet the ICCA criteria, not their economic value. In other words, a destination would achieve a higher ranking than another destination because of a higher number of events held, even though such events might be considerably smaller in delegate numbers than a destination staging fewer events but with greater delegate numbers (and hence greater economic value ([www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com))).

Even if conference tourism is a new development in Ethiopia, currently there are progresses in this regard. Hotels, resorts and also some organizations have well organized conference halls as part of their service. UNCC (United Nations Conference Center and the new AU's conference centers are the most prominent conference centers and many international organizations that have offices in Addis Ababa. These advantages enabled Addis Ababa to be a conference destination to host many meetings and conferences throughout the year. Therefore, this study will bring out the challenges that conference tourism faced to make Addis Ababa the international branded conference destination, at the same, it also works out towards a way how Addis Ababa will acquire its own brand with respect to the silent issue under study.

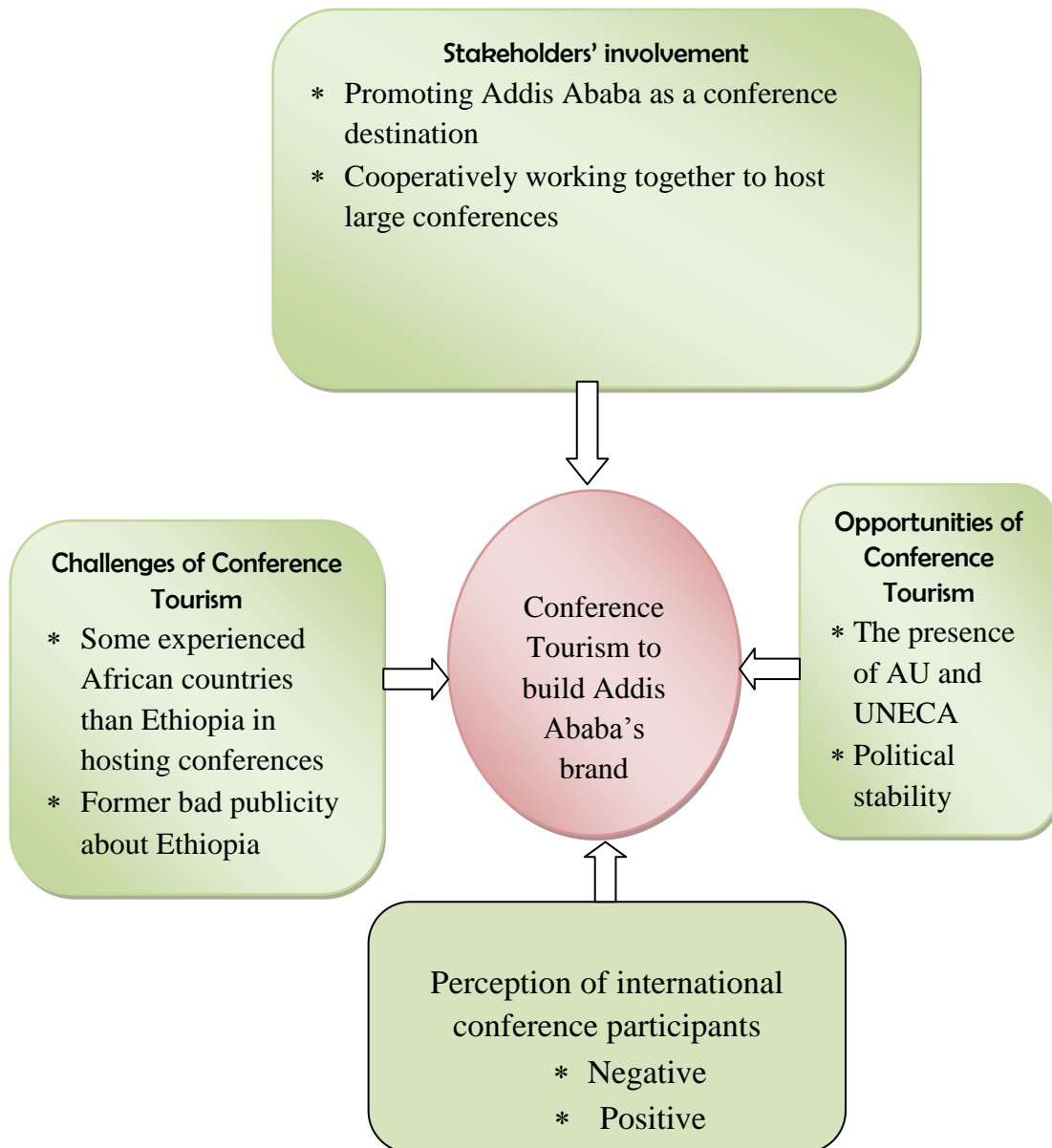
Table 3: Conference Tourism in Ethiopia (2008-2012)

Year	Purpose of visit						Total
	Business	Conference	Leisure & Transit	Transit	Visiting Relatives &	Not – stated	
2008	49209	15721	99394	77572	25482	62779	383399
2009	71374	47516	138070	81481	35593	53253	427286
2010	77816	36145	171414	84229	28672	70029	468305
2011	91064	50531	183008	86020	37116	75699	523438
2012	130321	57475	191537	90990	45174	80844	596341

Source: MoCT, 2013, Tourism Statistics Bulletin.

## 2.8 Conceptual framework of the study

This conceptual framework basically focuses on the assessment of conference tourism to make Addis Ababa the most preferable conference center. It conceptualizes the stakeholders' involvement in conference tourism segment along with the perceptions of international conference participants about the city to build Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination. It thereby indicates the role that conference tourism plays in building Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination after its challenges and prospects were identified.



(Source: Researcher's own compilation, 2015)

Fig 2: Conceptual Framework of the study

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

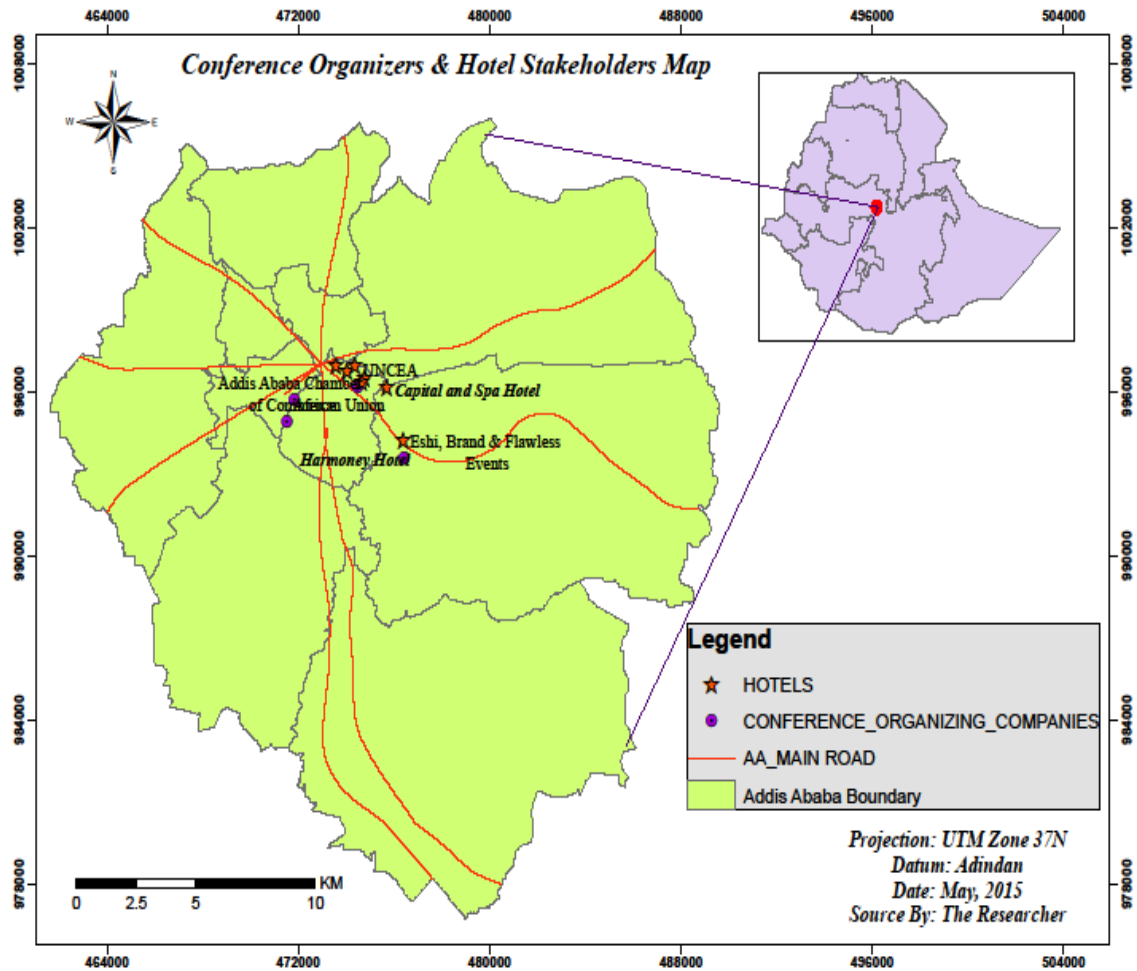
This chapter overviews about the descriptions and background of the study area along with the research methodology. And at last, the Ethical consideration about the study is outlined.

#### **3.2 Description of the study area**

##### **3.2.1 Location and Climate**

Addis Ababa was founded in 1886 by Emperor Menelik II. Though the city was founded earlier, the actual settlement had not begun until 1892. With the finalization of the palace soldiers and other servants of the king started to settle in and around the palace and the settlement in Addis Ababa had begun (Bahiru, 2005). The foundation of Addis Ababa also coincided with the modernization attempt of Emperor Menelik II and the expansion of Ethiopia's foreign relations with the outside world (Nebyou, 2007).

As a capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa is located at 09<sup>0</sup> 02'N 38<sup>0</sup> 42'E. The city is geographically situated in the central part of Ethiopia and at an elevation of around 2,355 meters above sea level that made the city the 5<sup>th</sup> elevated city in the world ([en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)) after Lapaz (Bolivia), Quito (Ecuador), Thimphu (Bhutan) and Bogota (Colombia) which gives Addis Ababa a mild annual mean temperature of approximately 16C<sup>0</sup>. The total area of the city occupies 220km<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Addis Ababa is situated between the two important water shades of Abay and Awash and surrounded by six mountains: Entoto, Wochecha, Yerer, Furi, Ziqualla and Menagesha. Around 250 bird species freely roaming, indigenous plants, hot spring water, 150 historic buildings and monuments, cultural and religious festivals and other attractions can be considered as potential tourist attractions here in Addis Ababa. As noted by Uhlig (2003), the climate of Addis Ababa is located between two of Ethiopia's climatic zones of the Dega and Weinadega.



No	Types Of data	Source	Remark
1	Addis Ababa shape file	Ethio-GIS Data	
2	AA_Main road Shape file	Ethio-GIS Data	
3	Conference organizing companies data	Collected from Field by using Hand held GPS	
4	Hotels	Collected from Field by using Hand held GPS	

Fig 3: Study Area Map of the Research

Moreover, Addis Ababa was brought to the international community with the opening of European and North American Embassies in 1900s that increased Addis Ababa's prominence within the international community to the existence of two organizations. These were; United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), established in 1958 and the Organization for African Unity (OAU), established in 1963. Since then, Addis Ababa has served as the seat of various regional, continental and international organizations (Fikru, 2007).

Wessling (2008) stated that there were three important factors that contributed for Addis Ababa being selected as the capital city of Ethiopia. These were: the introduction of eucalyptus tree that

alleviated firewood problems for both cooking and energy, the proclamation of legalizing ownership of urban land and the construction of railway connected Addis Ababa with the port of Djibouti.

Addis Ababa is the seat of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the diplomatic capital of Africa. According to Addis Ababa city government, finance and economic development bureau (2002), the city has three strata of administration; the city government at the top, 10 sub-city administrations at the middle and 116 woreda administrations at the bottom.

### **3.2.2 Socio-economic Background**

In 1900s Addis Ababa was basically a consumer city which was dependent on tributes and taxes collected from the countryside. At present, this cosmopolitan is endowed with diverse economic activities that range from commerce to manufacturing, finance, real estate and insurance (Wessling, 2008).

Addis Ababa just like any other cities in the world is basically made up of immigrant population. The ethnic composition of the city consists of around 80 ethnic groups. According to Central Statics Agency of Ethiopia (2007 estimation), Addis Ababa had a population of 2,738,248. Hence, the dominant ethnic groups in Addis Ababa were: Amhara 47.04%, Orommo 19.51%, Guraghe 16.34%, Tigre 6.18%, Silte 2.94% and Gamo 1.68%. Furthermore, the main languages spoken in the city include Amharic 71%, Oromiffaa 10.7%, Guragnya 8.37%, Tigrigna 3.6%, Siltigna 1.82% and Gamogna 1.03% (Population Census Commission, 2007).

### **3.3 Research Types**

Descriptive research is used to describe some aspect of a phenomenon, i.e., The status of a given phenomenon. It can help understand a topic and lead to causal analysis and aims to describe the state of affairs as it exists and interpret the what question (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, it was found convincing that the study was designed to be descriptive in its nature to answer the what questions of the research questions asked so far to find out the role that conference tourism plays in building Addis Ababa's brand as conference destination along with both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

It is important to choose a proper approach in conducting a research to collect relevant data. Marczyk et al. (2005) asserted that a qualitative approach involves studies that do not attempt to quantify their involve interviews and observations without formal measurement. On the other hand, quantitative approach uses for quantitative results through statistical summary or analysis. Taking the advantages of qualitative and quantitative research approaches into account, the blend of the two was used for this study.

### 3.5 Sampling Design

#### 3.5.1 Target Population

The target populations of this study were ten staffs from conference organizing companies here in Addis Ababa, 396 international conference participants, two experts from the ministry of culture and tourism, two experts from Chamber of commerce, three staffs from selected tour operation companies, three staffs from chain hotels, and two staffs from AUCC and UNCC.

#### 3.5.2 Sampling technique and Sample size

Apart from experts of the sectors, 3 selected tour operation companies were selected purposely based on their performance on generating foreign exchanges for the country. Moreover, the study targeted at 41,478 which was the five year average population from 2008 to 2012 (MoCT, 2013). Among the total population of conference participants (41,478), 396 is calculated as sample size using the formula described hereunder (Israel, 2009). After the determination of sample size using the below mentioned formula, a convenience sampling technique was employed for individual observation.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n = required sample size

N= number of total population

e = level of confidence = 95% (0.05)

### **3.6 Source of Data and Method of Data Collection**

The study was conducted by using primary and secondary data sources. And, both produced the quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data was collected through the following methods of data collection.

#### **1. Key Informant Interview**

The key informant interview was conducted from January 16, 2015 – March 16, 2015. The interview was both structured and non-structured. It was employed for six conference organizers, two experts from the ministry of culture and tourism, three selected tour operation companies, three chain hotels, and two conference centers so as to strengthen the information gained through questionnaires.

#### **2. Questionnaire**

Both the open-ended and closed ended items were included in the structured questionnaire, although the former was very limited in number for the sake of effective data analysis. The questionnaires questioned 396 international conference participants about their demographic profile, destination image, factors affecting their choice, spending pattern, potential of conference tourism in Ethiopia and so forth. Accordingly, some survey questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher's colleagues who were employees in the below listed hotels in Addis Ababa (Radisson Blue hotel, Capital Spa and hotel, Intercontinental hotel, Harmony Hotel, Jupiter International hotel, Hilton Hotel and Sheraton Addis) when the conference participants came back to their hotel for overnight stay at night time, from January 16, 2015 – March 16, 2015. Other survey questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher himself during the time stated above at AU and UNECA on the spot during conference participants' tea breaks and lunch time. As a result, 396 survey questionnaires were distributed and collected successfully.

#### **3. Field observation**

This was one of the most important methods of data collection employed in this study. It enabled to, realize the exact conditions which existed in the area such as the potentiality of the conference facilities, accommodation, carrying capacities of conference halls, the capacity of professionalism of the conference organizers, and the likes. Supplementing

with the primary data sources, published and unpublished materials, books, and journal articles were used as major secondary sources of data.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The process of data analysis was carried out quantitatively and qualitatively. The pre-coded quantifiable data (information gained from closed questionnaire) was entered into the latest version of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS v. 20) software for analysis. Besides, the descriptive statistics of percentage, mean, cross tabulation, frequency and ANOVA from inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. Then interpretation and discussion of the results were made. The qualitative data (information from interviews, open-ended questions, information gathered through field observation) were discussed using the qualitative description in conjunction with quantitative data.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of the study**

All the survey questionnaire items in this study have shown to be valid and reliable. Face and content validity of the items were reviewed by two instructors who have expertise in research on tourism and hospitality industry. Comments made by these individuals were incorporated to make better of the survey items.

On the basis of the comment from the experts, lengthy items were excluded and only the selected items were used. These items were selected based on item total correlation found among experts. The criterion was that the item-total correlation being more than 0.7. In addition, using the Cronbach's alpha criteria, the reliability estimates of the items indicated an adequate level of internal consistency (i.e. 0.74).

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Keeping the promises and agreements, this study will not fabricate, falsify or misrepresent the data. In other words, high attempt will be made to avoid or minimize bias and negligence in data analysis and interpretation, and other aspects of the research so as to keep its quality and integrity. Moreover, the study will take gender, social and environmental dimension into account. It prohibits discrimination against respondents on the basis of sex, race and other factors that are not related to the research competence and integrity. Women and men within acceptable age range will be given equal chance to be engaged in the research. It strives to mitigate any social harm respecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the research respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the discussion and interpretation of the results of the study, which is analyzed with the help of the latest version of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS v. 20) software using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

#### 4.2 Demographic Profile

##### 4.2.1 Sex and Employment Status of Respondents

The table 4 below illustrates the categories of respondents, who were conference participants in Addis Ababa, by sex and occupation types. Of the total 396 sample surveyed respondents, majority of them were male participants constituting about 74% (293) while the remaining 26% of respondents were females. In terms of occupational distribution of respondents, 70.2% were employed either in government or private company.

Table: 4 Respondents' category by sex and employment status

Sex			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	293	74.0	74.0
Female	103	26.0	26.0
Total	396	100.0	100.0
Employment status			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Employed	278	70.2	70.2
Self-employed	91	23.0	23.0
Retired	8	2.0	2.0
Student	1	.3	.3
Other	18	4.5	4.5
Total	396	100.0	100.0

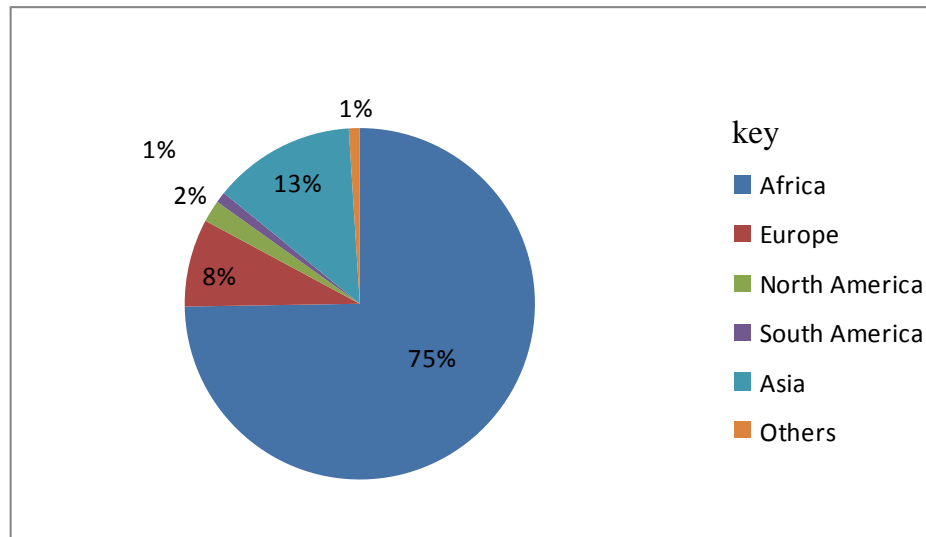
Source: Field survey, 2015

Those who run their own businesses accounted by far one-fifth of the total while the retired, students and respondents who were from another occupation type together constituted about 6.8%. This clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents, who

came to Ethiopia to participate in different conferences held in Addis Ababa during the time this survey was undertaken, were either delegated by their employers.

#### 4.2.2 Regional Residence of Respondents

People from different parts of the globe with different cultural background have been participating in different conferences (regardless of its types) held in Ethiopia since several decades ago.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Fig. 4 Regional Residence of Respondents

As it is seemingly demonstrated in figure 4 above, sample of respondents for this study were originally not from a single country or a single region or even a single continent rather they were originally from almost all over the world albeit majority of the conference participant respondents were Africans accounting three-fourth of the total. 8% and 13% of respondents were from Europe and Asia, including the Middle East respectively, while insignificant number of participants came from North America, South America, and other parts of the world; each constitutes about 2%, 1% and 1% respectively.

#### 4.3 Stakeholder involvement in Conference Tourism

##### 4.3.1 Conference Tourism Stakeholders

The involvement of different stakeholders in today's conference business is inevitable. International conference participants used different Airlines as a potential mode of transport to reach Addis Ababa so as to participate in various conferences held at

different times. As table 5 below illustrates, Ethiopian Airlines is one among the others which is actively participating in the development of conference tourism in Ethiopia through providing its enchanted services to the participants who fly with it to arrive at Addis Ababa. About three-fourth (75.5%) of the sample surveyed responded that they used Ethiopian Airlines as a mode of transport to arrive at and to take part in the conferences hosted in Addis Ababa. Apart from this, those who used other countries' Airlines to come to Addis Ababa to attend conferences accounted 23.5%. Only 1% of respondents used either own or rented private jets as a charter flight.

As a stakeholder, Ethiopian Airline took the lion's share among Airlines used in transporting people from different corner of the world to Addis Ababa that enabled them to be part of conferences held during the time when this survey was conducted. As a key part of conference industry's stakeholders, Ethiopian Airline serves as a bridge and plays a great role in bringing international and continental conference participants from their own home country to the conference destination, Addis Ababa. By doing so, it was obvious that, Ethiopian Airline received a huge amount of money (USD) while bringing such type of conference participants in which the destination highly benefited from in terms of injecting money into the destination's economy so as to enhance the economic development of the county in one way and accelerates the growth of today's conference industry in another. Apart from Airlines used to bring conference participants to Addis Ababa, upon arrival at Bole International Airport, different surface transports were used in transferring them from Airport to hotel. As indicated in table 5 below, the rented type of car accounted all most half of transports used (50.5%) in moving conference participants in Addis Ababa starting from the first day of their arrival, during and until the last day of their departure.

Nearly one-third (32.3%) of the pre-arranged mode of transports that conference participants used during their stay was provided by various event organizers (UNECA, AU and Private event organizing companies). The Taxi transports used to transport participants in Addis Ababa, including the shuttle services to transfer them in (from Airport to hotel) and out (from hotel to Airport) for those who came to the destination to take part in conferences hosted in Addis Ababa was 14.6% while the public transport was the least (1.3%) means of transport used by conference attendees in Addis Ababa.

Table 5: Stakeholders in Conference Tourism.

<b>Airlines used</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>Ethiopian Airlines</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>75.5</b>
<b>Other country's Airlines</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.5</b>
<b>Private Jet</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mode of transport used in Addis Ababa</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>Public transport</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>Rented car</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>50.3</b>
<b>Taxi</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>14.6</b>
<b>On foot</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Transport provided by conference organizers</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>32.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Conference Organizers in Addis Ababa</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>African Union</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>
<b>Private conference organizing companies</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>32.8</b>
<b>UNECA</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>51.3</b>
<b>Travel Agency</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Apart from this, only 1.5% out of the total surveyed respondents responded that they haven't used any of surface transport during their stay in Addis Ababa because of either they couldn't afford since it was higher than what they planned to spend for transportation costs or they need to have a walk on foot in Addis Ababa to explore the destination more or due to the nearness of their hotel to the conference centers. This implied that there were no economic benefits that Addis Ababa gained from such type of

conference participants, particularly in the case of mode of transport. However, it doesn't mean that these conference participants didn't spend their money for hotel accommodations and other services offered to them during their stay here in Addis Ababa.

As part of stakeholders, the above table 5 clearly indicates that there were conferences organizers actively get involved in organizing different conferences in Addis Ababa. Of the total respondents surveyed, more than half (51.3%) of conference participants responded that they came to the destination to participate in conferences that were organized by the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Next to United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), nearly one-third (32.8%) of the conferences were organized by different private conference organizing companies, whereas 13.6%, 2% and 0.3% conferences were organized by the African Union (AU), other organizers and Travel Agencies respectively here in Addis Ababa when this survey was undertaken.

There are few numbers of licensed conference organizing company that currently function in organizing an international and continental conferences here in Addis Ababa; namely, Flawless Events, Brand events and travel services and Eshi Events (privately owned companies), Addis Ababa chamber of commerce (governmentally owned), and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and African Union.

Compared to other key conference industry's stakeholders, the effort of UNECA in bringing huge numbers of conference participants to the destination from different corners of the world as a conference organizer was significant as it is an international organization, wider in scope, and better in conference facilities than any other conference centers in Addis Ababa (see table 5). UNECA, an intergovernmental organization with headquarter located in Addis Ababa serves as home of various conferences venue that has been hosting different conferences in the city. When the interview was made with Miss Hawine, the assistant conference organizer in the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa on 10 March, 2015, for the question of marketing strategies used in promoting the company, she replied that since it is an intergovernmental organization, they would not use any type of marketing strategy to promote and bring conference participants to Addis Ababa rather, requests came from conference participants whenever it was needed

so that they arranged the time schedule, venue, participant's badge and other conference facilities after the cost break down was done and agreed upon between the organizers and participants. Sheraton Addis is the only stakeholder hotel they were working with in terms of catering services.

The current active privately owned event organizers have been organizing a very few international and continental conferences that have been hosted in Addis Ababa at different time. The role of these event organizers are not eminent in upgrading the conference tourism in the country either due to the existence of African Union, United Nation Economic Commission for Africa and other large organizations (interview with staffs of Event organizers) or it could have been due to the immature stage of this niche tourism, conference, in Ethiopia. Even though lots of contributions were expected from the privately owned conference organizers, there were not pleasing efforts made so as to make Addis Ababa the preferable conference destination in this regard. Surprisingly, those active and privately owned conference organizers together organized nearly one-third (32.8%) of the total conferences hosted in Addis Ababa. This indicates that these three conference organizers separately accounted about 10.9% of each i.e. Out of 396 surveyed respondents, those who came to Addis Ababa through these conference organizers were 130. Apparently, about 2% out of the total respondents responded that they came to the destination for conference purpose that was organized either by their country's embassy or NGO's. Only one conference participant who accounted 0.3% was being in Addis Ababa through Travel agencies/tour operation companies. As a key stakeholder in conference tourism, the contribution of travel agent/ tour operation Company for the growth of conference industry in Addis Ababa was very much insignificant.

As the conference organizers answered for the interview question of the marketing strategies used to promote their company's services; two of privately owned companies answered only the word of mouth (WOM) type of marketing tool were used because, they thought as it was a good opportunity to build their company's image in satisfying or delighting those conference participants once came to Addis Ababa, in return conference participants would promote for them by the means of word of mouth for the services and experiences they have gained while in Addis Ababa. Other event organizers, including the Addis Ababa chamber of commerce were using printed media (brochure, flier and

annually published magazine) and electronic media (internet and website) to promote their company's services internationally, however, the scope of their promotion was only limited to particular areas of geographical locations as it was indicated in table 8 in the case of the availability of conference organizer as an influencing factor.

From the interviews made with event organizers stated above here in Addis Ababa, almost all of them answered that there were no strong relationship and tough coordination among privately owned conference organizing companies including the Addis Ababa chamber of commerce. The main reason why such weak coordination and collaboration happened among these stakeholders was that no one could trust the other in working together as business partners in the conference industry. Each of them had a fear of if some powerful conference organizing companies could control the market and share a large portion of the profits from the business, those incapable companies would be knocked- out from the conference market. As a result, they were separately running their conference business in a small amount to get tiny profits (they might organize on average 2-4 international conferences per year) rather than cooperatively working together to host larger conferences and in return, exploit larger profits. Consequently, all these conference organizing companies had weak linkages with AU, UNECA and hotel establishments, particularly on catering services as part of their stakeholders. This indicates that the coordination and collaboration among private companies themselves and between private companies and government in hosting different conferences held in Addis Ababa, the role of these key stakeholders were not strong enough in bringing the significant contributions to the growth of conference industry in Ethiopia, particularly, in Addis Ababa.

The owners, including the employees of the companies, solely have been arranging and organizing conferences from the experiences they have had before. From the interview with anonymous event organizers, even if they have different educational backgrounds in different fields of studies, most of them engaged in a conference industry without having formal long-term or short term training in the field of conference industry. To the question asked whether the organizers did have participation experiences for the conferences held at Addis Ababa before on the brand destination, all conference organizers currently active in the business, including the AU and UNECA replied as they didn't have any participation experiences since the term of brand destination is a new concept for them. Surprisingly, some of these organizers except the AACoC and Brand

Events didn't have any participation even on conferences hosted in Addis Ababa by either of them. However, two of them (AACoC and brand events) have had both domestic and international conference participation experiences but not on the brand destination.

Even though African Union (AU) is the biggest and largest conference center in Ethiopia, where African leaders and others meet one another on different issues since its establishment, the conferences that were organized by the AU accounted only 13.6% of the total sample surveyed i.e. Out of 396 conference participants, only 54 participants came to Addis Ababa through African Union, which was quite small in number when this sample survey was undertaken. As an interview was made with two anonymous AU's event organizers, there was no organized and autonomous department responsible to organize such conferences in AU. Similarly, there were no marketing strategies that have been used for promotional purposes to host conferences on various issues. Even the organization didn't have a separate conference website. Any person, company or organization that needs to make a conference in AU has to communicate either physically or through telephone with these fragmented venue facilitators in AU to arrange them the schedule of venue for a particular date(s) and letting them know the venue costs accordingly. Apart from this, they would have weak coordination with other stakeholders, particularly with conference organizers. Often times, when conferences are hosted, specifically, AU used Tivoli bar and restaurant, and sometimes Sheraton Addis as a key hotel stakeholder on catering services. This implies that, even if the AU represents the continent of Africa and has a power to bring so many Africa's conference issues to Addis Ababa; it couldn't play great roles in organizing international and continental conferences without being served as a conference center. There were no strong and dedicated conference professionals in the organization in this regard.

The following table 6 indicates the number of total employees, the agglomeration of both professionals and amateurs or experienced staffs, of all event organizers in Addis Ababa.

As indicated in table 6, when the interview questions were made with the conference organizers on number of their employees, whom they have been working with, about 105 employees were working in all companies.

Table: 6 Number of employees in conference organizing companies

No.	Conference organizing company	Number of employees
1	United Nation Economic Commission for Africa	15
2	African Union	4
3	Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce	70
4	Brand Events and Travel services	9
5	Eshi Events	3
6	Flawless Events	4
Total		105

Source: Field Survey, 2015

This indicates that how much few numbers of employees are engaged in facilitating and organizing conference activities in Addis Ababa, particularly, employees in those private conference organizing companies where most of them had no professional competence in the field of conference sector but through on the job experiences.

#### **4.3.2 Sources of information about Addis Ababa as conference destination**

The source of information for respondents to choose Addis Ababa/Ethiopia as conference destination is clearly manifested in the below table7. About 45.3% of the sample survey responded that they heard about the destination's information from their friends and relatives who have either been in Addis Ababa or who were living in Addis Ababa during this survey was conducted. Along this, 38.2% of these conference participants were being part of the conferences due to electronic media (internet and website) and broadcasting media (TV or Radio) as a source of information about the destination. This might be due to the broadcasting media here in Addis Ababa currently started giving air services in different languages (Arabic, French and others) on Arab channel and Nile sat or from other foreign broadcasting media (BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, press TV, Euro News and etc).

Table: 7 Sources of information

Sources of information	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Media (Internet & broadcasting)	246	38.2%	62.1%
Friends and relatives	292	45.3%	73.7%
Printed media	50	7.8%	12.6%
Others (travel agencies, trade fairs....)	56	8.7%	14.1%
Total	644	100.0%	162.6%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

As it was indicated above in table 7, about 8.7% out of total respondents replied they gathered information about Addis Ababa through ‘other sources’ of information (travel agencies, trade fairs, embassies and NGO). These parts of attendees replied that they have got information about Addis Ababa as a conference destination by participating on different trade fairs and exhibitions conducted in different countries as a means of promotion and from travel agents located in Addis Ababa. Numerically, 7.8% of conference participants replied as they got information about Addis Ababa from printed media (travel books, brochures, magazines, fliers, newspaper and etc). This implies the marketing strategies used by those conference organizers in Addis Ababa were significantly brought few numbers of conference issues to the destination as it was discussed on the above table 5, in the case of conference organizers in Addis Ababa.

#### **4.4 Economic Contribution of Conference Tourism**

##### **4.4.1 Spending pattern and duration of stay**

The below table 8, indicates the money that conference participants spent for different purposes during their stay in Addis Ababa. From the sample surveyed, those who made their overnight in Addis Ababa for four and above nights (81) spent more than 1001 USD and the surveyed respondents who made their overnight stay for 3 nights (101 out of 152 conference participants) spent about 601 – 1000USD whereas, those conference attendees

stayed for 2 and 1 overnights in Addis Ababa spent about 300 – 600 USD & less than 300 USD respectively.

The money that spent by individual conference participant was almost within the same range with a number of over nights spent in Addis Ababa. The more number of overnights they stayed, the more money (USD) and the less number of overnight they stayed, the less money (USD) they spent for different reasons in the destination. This indicates that conference tourism plays significant roles in the destination’s economic growth in which different stakeholders (event organizers, tour operation companies, travel agencies, hotel establishments, government, Ethiopian Airline Company, car rental companies and others) that involved in a conference industry are benefited in various ways.

Table 8: Number of night stay and money spent by conference participants

Number of nights stay	Money spent				Total
	< \$300	\$300-\$600	\$601-\$1000	>\$1001	
One	8	7	3	1	19
Two	8	46	17	9	80
Three	5	17	101	35	158
4 and above	5	22	31	81	139
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>396</b>

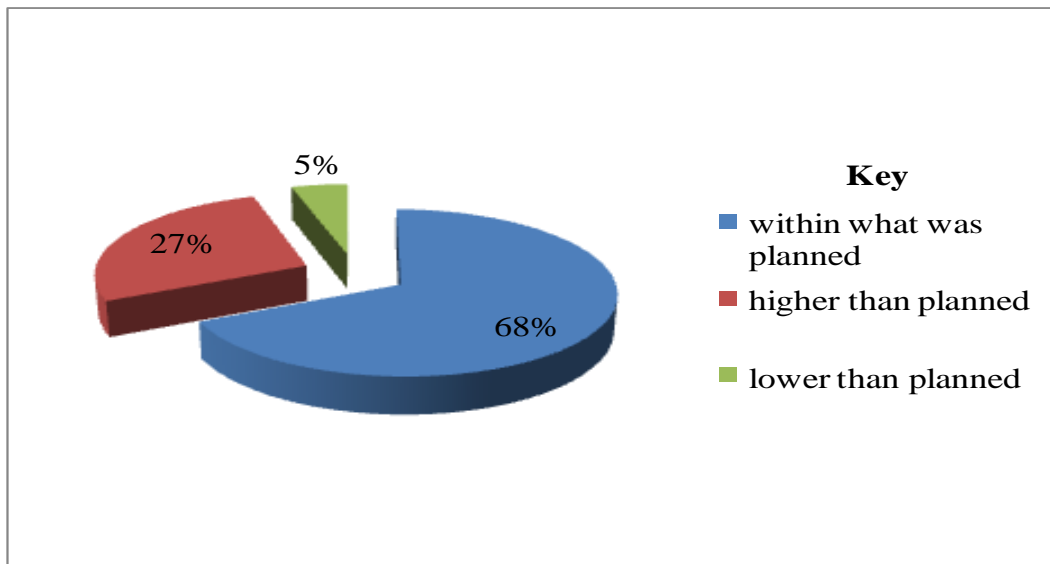
Source: Field Survey, 2015

When the conference participants stay in Addis Ababa for longer time, they will spend huge amounts of money due to their personal expenses increase than shorter time duration. As a result, conference tourism injects the foreign exchange money directly or indirectly into the country’s economic development (i.e. For hotel room service, food and beverage, transport service, souvenir products and others) from those international conference participants who planned to stay for longer time periods in Addis Ababa as a conference destination so as to increase the county’s well being.

#### 4.4.2 Expenditure plan of International Conference participants

The below figure 5 indicates that from the total 396 samples surveyed, almost more than two-third (68%) of respondents responded that the expenditure they have been spending in Addis Ababa during their stay for conference, which is proportion to number of overnight (see table 8) was almost as per it was planned at the originating country. Only 5% of total respondents' actual expenditure was lower than what they had planned to spend. However, more than one-fourth or (27%) of the survey respondents replied that the plan of their expenditure that they thought to spend at the destination was somehow higher than their expenditure's plan.

From the below figure 5, about 68% of surveyed respondents responded that what they spent during their stay was exactly within the range of their expenditure plan regardless of costs incurred for various reasons while they were in Addis Ababa. This implies that how much Addis Ababa as an international and continental conference destination was fair and reasonable in terms of costs spent by conference participants in relation to conferences hosted in Addis Ababa.



Source: Field Survey: 2015

Fig. 5: Expenditures Plan of conference participants

## 4.5 Opportunities of Conference Tourism

### 4.5.1 Service Qualities in Addis Ababa

From the below table 9, the transportation service offered to the conference participants while they were in Addis Ababa was good as 35.1% of them replied. Along this, 18.2% out of total respondents responded transportation services during their stay was very good while their counterpart, conference participants who have been in Addis Ababa answered that transportation services were quite important by constituting more than half (53.3%) of the total. As it was discussed in the below table 9, in the case of modes of transport used in Addis Ababa, the combination of modes of transport (public transport, rented cars, taxis and shuttle services and transports provided by conference organizers) made the services offered better for the conference participants as long as they used for moving from place to place in the destination during their stay in Addis Ababa for conference activities.

Table: 9 Quality of Services offered in Addis Ababa

Factors	VP		P		NO		G		VG	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Transpiration within AA	18	4.5	53	13.4	114	28.8	139	35.1	72	18.2
Accommodation	23	5.8	54	13.6	114	28.8	133	33.6	72	18.2
Tourist information center	39	9.8	87	22.0	205	51.8	54	13.6	11	2.8
Level of service and quality of food in restaurant/café	14	3.5	56	14.1	114	28.8	154	38.9	58	14.6
Convenience of conference venue	5	1.3	43	10.9	87	22.0	169	42.7	92	23.2

Key: VP=Very Poor, P=Poor, NO=No Opinion, G=Good, VG=Very Good

Source: Field Survey, 2015

About 28.8% of conference participants replied, they had no opinion towards to transportation services were good or bad because they either transported by their

embassies and NGO's vehicles or they were conference participants moved from place to place on their own foot as it was clearly indicated in the above table 5 in the case of modes of transportation used in Addis Ababa. However, those who responded that transportation services in Addis Ababa were poor and very poor, accounted 13.4% and 4.5%, respectively, i.e. Blow one-fifth (17.9%) of total conference participants responded to transportation services were so poor while they have been in Addis Ababa as conference participants.

The accommodation is basic requirements while any traveler away from their home. Exactly, about one-third (33.6%) of the surveyed respondents replied the accommodation service (hotel room service, food and beverage services and other related accommodation services) during their stay in Addis Ababa was somewhat good and followed by 18.2% of those who said the service quality of accommodation given to them during their stay here in Addis Ababa was very good. In counterpart, nearly one-fifth (19.4%) of total respondents responded quality of accommodation services offered during their stay was bad. Apart from this, those conference participants who had no idea either services were bad or good constituted about 28.8% out of total respondents. From this table, about 54.8% of conference participants for the period of their stay in Addis Ababa for conference purposes replied as they were served with good quality of accommodation services in this regard.

Numerically, more than half (51.8%) of the sample surveyed replied they had no idea whether the service of tourist information center was good or bad since they haven't been accessed to such type services as their ultimate goals were participating on the conferences but not for other visits in or out of Addis Ababa. About 22% and 9.8% of those who have gotten the opportunities to be accessed in the tourist information center located at conference centers or tour operation companies somewhere in Addis Ababa in one way or another while they stayed in Addis Ababa as a conference destination replied the service quality given to them was bad and very bad respectively. However, the least percentage (16.4%) of the sample survey responded that the quality of services given in the tourist information center was good as per the information needed by conference participants in exploring more about Addis Ababa. As it was indicated in the above table 5, in the case of stakeholders' involvement, the cooperation and collaboration among

these conference industry's stakeholders, especially, the linkage between conference organizers and tour operation companies or travel agencies were so weak and not too strong in making conference participants to stay some more days and spend some more money to visit other destinations in Ethiopia as part of their travel.

About 38.9% of the total sample surveyed replied the quality of foods provided for consumption in one or various restaurants during their stay for the conference was good. In the same way, 14.6% of them also replied the quality of foods in restaurants/cafés was very good in terms of taste, time of delivery, ingredients, cleanliness of the restaurant (hygiene and sanitation) and cleanliness of the service providers themselves. Together, more than half (53.5%) of the sample surveyed replied as the quality of foods in restaurants/hotels or café was better during their stay in Addis Ababa. Those who neither said the quality of food in restaurants was good nor bad accounted almost 28.8%. They had no idea about the quality of foods they are provided with from restaurants in their stay whether it was good or bad. In a counterpart, 17.6% of them replied that the quality of foods they have eaten during their stay from the restaurants in Addis Ababa was so poor, i.e. the restaurant, the foods and the service providers were poorly organized.

About 42.7% and 23.2% of conference participants positively replied to the convenience of conference venues as good and very good respectively, while they were being part of conferences held in Addis Ababa. 22% out of them responded they had no idea whether the venues in which the conferences held in were convenient or not. Either these numbers of conference participants came to Addis Ababa for the first time and they might not have participation experiences on conferences hosted in other countries before or they didn't want to reply in this regard.

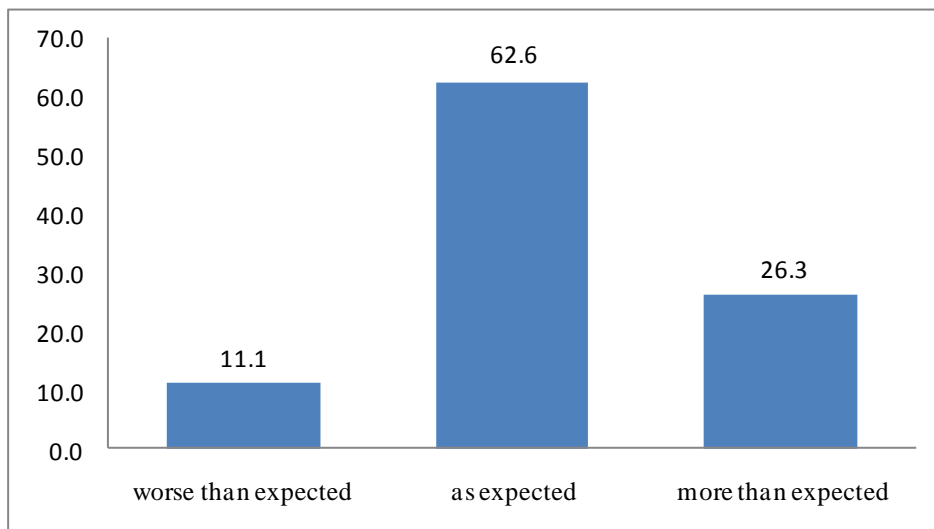
However, 12.1% of respondents replied the convenience of conference venues here in Addis Ababa were not convenient and poorly organized. Indeed, these respondents might have either participation experiences on conferences held before in other countries in a standardized and well equipped conference centers, which maintained the participant's comfort than conference centers in Addis Ababa or they were negatively responded to the convenience of conference venues because they still had a negative perceptions and attitudes towards the image of the country (see table 11) in the case of participants primary and secondary image about Addis Ababa/Ethiopia.

When interviewing questions were made with the key informants of the conference organizers (Mr. Ayele, Miss Nahome, Miss Mahider, Miss Selome, Miss Hawine and anonymous interviewee from AACoC, Flawless events, Eshi events, Brand events and travel, UNECA, and AU), they all soundly answered as there are problems in terms of the conference venues because of a limited number of conference centers which can accommodate larger number of conference participants at a time. Even, the carrying capacity of UNECA and AU couldn't accommodate different conferences organized on various issues at the same time when as many as large numbers of conference attendees are expected to come to the destination in terms of mega conferences. Apart from this, 65.9% out of a total sample surveyed positively responded as the conference venues to host various conferences on different issues in Addis Ababa were well equipped and maintained the comfort of conference participants due to the attendees were few in number when this survey questionnaire were undertaken.

#### **4.5.2 Service Expectation of International Conference participants**

The expectation of Consumers about services to be delivered to them, highly affects their satisfaction level based on the performance of the services/products. As it's demonstrated in figure 6 below, about 62.6% or 248 out of 396 conference attendees, replied as their expectation about services (transportation within AA, accommodation, convenience of the conference venue, level of service and quality of food in restaurant/café) were met during their stay at Addis Ababa i.e. What they expected to get before and what they were getting during their stay has been met. They were satisfied since their expectation was equally met with the service performances, they have acquired in relation to service qualities as discussed in the case of service qualities in Addis Ababa in the above table 9.

Importantly, those who got service qualities beyond their expectation constituted about more than one-fourth (26.3%) of conference participants. What they expected to get before was less than what they got during their stay.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Fig 6: Service expectations

In other words, the service performances, they were enjoyed with during their stay in Addis Ababa would be much greater than their expectations. They were delighted with those services given to them during they spent their time in Addis Ababa as a conference destination. Perhaps, these much numbers of attendees were those who had negative impressions about overall image of the country before coming so that having had such availability of quality services during their stay positively changed their impression. Those who already had a positive image about the country before coming which sounds 88.9% out of total sample survey respondents replied as they were satisfied and over satisfied with the services given in Addis Ababa as a conference destination. In counterpart, about more than one-tenth (11.1%) of sample survey responded as the services were not given as they expected. Their expectation was much greater than the service performances offered, i.e. they expected more, but less and poor services offered during their stay in Addis Ababa. These respondents were either those who experienced better services in other countries than services given to them in Addis Ababa or those who have had more than one conference participation before and it was perhaps, thought that the services once they experienced were better when compared to the services given while these survey questionnaires were conducted.

#### **4.5.3 Factors influencing the choice of Addis Ababa as a conference destination**

There are many factors that influenced conference participants' choice of destination in terms of conference tourism. As it was indicated in table 10, about 39.1% respondents responded price was an important influencing factor why they have chosen Addis Ababa as a conference destination. The money they spent for hotel room service, food and beverage, transport and sometimes for souvenir products and others, as long as they stayed in Addis Ababa for the conference was considerable. Conversely, nearly one-fourth (24%) of the total sample survey responded that the price of goods and services to be offered in Addis Ababa couldn't influence their choices at all. Whether the price of goods and services are cheap or expensive, they didn't bother about the prices. The only thing they wanted was to be part of the conference participants.

About nearly one-fifth (19.7%) of respondents responded price was an unimportant influencing factor in choosing the destination for the conference. Rather than price, they were greatly influenced by other influencing factors in choosing the destination, so that price factor was unimportant and unnecessary for these conference participants. However, 17.2% of them were influenced most importantly, by price factor.

Numerically, more than half of the sample surveyed (56.3%) indicates how much conference participants considered price as one of an important influencing factor in choice of a given destination. Regarding the destination's safety and security, more than half of the respondents (52.9%) were importantly influenced by the political stability of Ethiopia to make Addis Ababa as their choice of a conference destination which is in line with the response of Major conference organizers such as AACoC, Brand events and tour services, Eshi events, and Flawless events that the presence of political stability and security of the Country enabled Addis Ababa comparably a preferable conference destination. This would probably be due to either other influencing factors or the fact that Ethiopia is considered to be of moderate risk compared to other East African countries (IGAD member states) that are all ranked as high risk by Political Instability Index of the economist intelligence unit of the World Economic Forum (UNECA, 2013). In contrast, more than one-fourth (26.7%) of the total respondents replied security and safety was not such an important influencing factor to choose and to take part on conferences held in Addis Ababa. This means, it was not the safety and security of the

country that attracted these conference participants. But, Ethiopia is positioned at 100 and 128 out of 139 countries by Travel and Tourism Competitiveness of Index for its poor business cost of terrorism and the number of road accidents respectively (UNECA, 2013).

About more than one-fifth (20.24%) of conference participants were neutral from the safety and security of the conference destination. As such, the presence or absence of safety and security couldn't be an influencing factor for them in choosing Addis Ababa as a home of conferences. On the other hand, more than one-fourth (26.7%) out of total respondents replied security was not such an important influencing factor. According to these respondents, destination's security was not an influencing factor to take part on conferences held in Addis Ababa.

Table 10: Conference destinations' influencing factors

Factors	VU		UN		NE		IM		VI	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Price level	21	5.3	57	14.4	95	24.0	155	39.1	68	17.2
safety& security	31	7.8	75	18.9	80	20.2	137	34.5	73	18.4
Geographical location	43	10.9	86	21.7	132	33.3	95	24.0	40	10.1
Recommendations	25	6.3	64	16.2	120	30.3	146	36.8	41	10.4
Image of a country	43	10.9	60	15.2	100	25.2	127	32.0	66	16.6
Availability of conference organizers	41	10.4	50	12.6	71	17.9	142	35.9	92	23.2
Availability of conference facilities	15	3.8	20	5.2	39	9.0	200	51.0	122	31.0
Presence of AU and UNECA	18	4.5	50	12.6	109	27.5	144	36.4	75	18.9
Cultural and historic heritage	65	16.4	139	35.1	124	31.3	46	11.6	22	5.6
Entertainment possibilities	110	27.8	141	35.6	94	23.7	39	9.8	12	3.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Key: VU=Very unimportant, UN= Unimportant, NE= Neutral, IM= Important, VI= Very important.

According to Miss Mahider Kebede (interview), the founder and owner of Eshi events Plc, there were two conferences shifted to and hosted in Addis Ababa, that were organized by her company when terrorists attacked and killed so many people at the market center in Kenya even if the conferences were initially thought to be held at Nairobi in Kenya. As all conference organizers and anonymous stakeholder interviewees answered, peace/security was the kick-start and selling point in Ethiopia, particularly for the growth of Addis Ababa's conference industry, though those selected chain hotels' representatives in Addis Ababa denied cooperating to answer the interview questions that directly related to conference businesses in this regard.

During the other day of the interview, selected anonymous tour operators and two interviewees from the ministry of culture and tourism replied, as they haven't been organizing conferences in Addis Ababa rather, they outsourced other conference planners if it was needed to do so. More importantly, those tour operators replied, they could prepare tour programs in and out of Addis Ababa before and after the meeting if event organizers requested to do so in advance to elongate the attendees' overnight stay in the destination so as to get the profit and increase attendees' expenditures at the destination. In return, Addis Ababa as a conference destination would be specifically benefited economically. On the contrary, due to the weak coordination between tour operation companies and conference organizers, insignificant activities were done in this regard. Even though tour operating companies have been bringing tourists to Ethiopia from each corner of the world by using different marketing strategies, they were unable to make sound differences that enabled conference participants staying in or out of Addis Ababa for some days to explore different tourist attractions that Ethiopia endowed with before they would depart home.

From the above table 10, about 32.6% (10.9% & 21.7%) respondents replied the geographical location of Addis Ababa was not importantly considered as an influencing factor of conferences that were hosted in Addis Ababa whether the geographical location of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) is either at the horn of Africa, it couldn't be a major considerable factor in destination choice i.e. Geographical location doesn't matter, what matters were other factors. However, more than one-third (34.1%) of the respondents considered the geographical location of Ethiopia more important in influencing their choice of Addis Ababa as a conference destination.

Nearly one-third (33.3%) of the sample surveyed respondents remained silent in indicating whether the geographical location of Addis Ababa was the influencing or not the influencing factor in choosing the destination. They were concerned either with other factors that highly influenced their choice of Addis Ababa.

Another influencing factor in choosing destination for the purpose of the conference was recommendations from those who have been in Addis Ababa before. Accordingly, about 47.2% of conference participants came to the destination because they were recommended by other conference participants those who have been in Addis Ababa for conference at different time. For them, recommendations about peace and security, conference hall and facilities, availability of transport, quality of services, good image of the country and other factors were very important factors to influence their choices since it might be their first time to come to Addis Ababa to participate on or host conferences. However, 22.5% replied that the availability of recommendation was not totally an influencing factor to come and participate in conferences hosted in Addis Ababa because they might have an experience in visiting Addis Ababa before as a conference destination while 30.3% of the sample surveyed replied they came to Addis Ababa by their own without recommended by other conference participants. They were neutral from any recommendation of others. As a result, the recommendations were not necessary and an influencing factor for such type of participants whether available or not.

Regarding the image of the country (Ethiopia), 32% and 16.6% out of total respondents responded the image of the country was respectively an important and very important influencing factor in choosing Addis Ababa as a good conference destination. About 48.6% of the total respondents together replied that positive image of the country have influenced them in choosing Addis Ababa as a conference destination. This implies that how much a given country's image played an important role and being an influencing factor for conference participants prefer to one country from others. It also implies that the bad image of the country is being changed by the role of conference tourism and other factors. About 25.2% of respondents replied they were neutral from the image of the country. Whether the image of the country was good or bad, they didn't care. What they care was being part of conference participants. All most equally, with those who neutral respondents, 26.1% of them responded as the image of the country was unimportant and not be a major influencing factor in destination choice.

With regard to the availability of conference organizers as influencing factors, more than one-third (35.9%) and one-fifth (23.2) of the participants answered the availability of conference organizers were highly an important and very important influencing factors respectively. Almost 59.1% of respondents replied that the availability of various professional conference organizers those who capable enough to organize both international and continental conferences were taken as major influencing factors to bring many conference issues to Addis Ababa though few numbers of conference organizers were available here in Addis Ababa (see table 5). On the availability of conference organizers, however, in general, 23% of the conference participants replied the presence of conference organizers were unimportant at all to bring them to Addis Ababa. Even if there were no conference organizers, nothing could stop them from being part of conferences i.e. It might be because of they arranged everything necessary by their own to host conferences in Addis Ababa by communicating directly with those services provides without the involvement of conference organizers.

About 17.9% of them responded neither the availability nor the absence of conference organizers in Addis Ababa could be considered as an influencing factor for them. They were independent of such influencing factors when choosing Addis Ababa as a conference destination. Numerically, more than half (51%) of the total sample survey responded the availability of conference facilities were importantly a decisive influencing factor in choosing a conference destination and followed by 31% of those respondents who agreed upon the availability of conference facilities were even more important influencing factor for them.

In general, all together, from the sample surveyed, 82% of them replied the availability of conference facilities (conference halls, conference equipments within conference halls, and other services accompanied by conferences) were really the most important influencing factors of destination choice in conference industry. However, those who replied availability of conference facilities were not an influencing factor in choosing a conference destination and those who replied as they were neutral of such factor constituting equaled at about 9%. This indicates that the majority of the respondents (82%) were most importantly influenced by the availability of such conference facilities as decisive factors before making decisions of destination choice.

Regarding AU and UNECA, 36.4% and 18.9% of conference participants were influenced by the presence of such international and continental conference centers here in Addis Ababa. Of course, AU and UNECA are served as home for small, medium and large conferences held in Addis Ababa for many years. Accordingly, about 55.3% out of total respondents replied as they were importantly influenced by the presence of the two organizations. As long as it was discussed at table 5 above, in case of the conference organizers in Addis Ababa, UNECA alone took the lion's shares or large portion of the percentage (51.3%) in organizing conference here in Addis Ababa and a small amount of percentage was done (13.6) by AU in this regard. About 27.5% of the conference participants replied neither presence nor absence of these two organizations were an influencing factor for them. They were neutrally come to Addis Ababa to participate in conferences that were either organized by the AU and UNECA or by their own country's embassy or NGO's in Addis Ababa.

Apart from this, 17.1% out of the total sample survey responded the presence of AU and UNECA were not importantly influencing factors to make Addis Ababa the preferable conference destination. This implies, even in the absence of the AU and UNECA, these conference participants could participate in conferences at somewhere (hotels, NGO's bureau, governmental offices and private companies, embassies and etc.).

Even though Ethiopia is endowed with colorful cultural and plentiful historical heritages, exactly 35.1% and 16.4% of participants replied availability of these cultural and historical heritages were not importantly influenced their choice. Out of the total sample surveyed, almost more than half (51.5%) of them answered the cultural and historical heritages that the destination owned were not an important influencing factor when they have chosen Addis Ababa as a conference destination. Nearly one-third (31.3%) of them replied they were neutral whether the country is endowed with cultural and historical attractions or not. They might be influenced by other factors other than the availability of such attractions here in Addis Ababa. Only a few numbers of respondents (17.2%) replied as cultural and historical heritages more importantly influenced their choice of coming to Addis Ababa besides to the conference activities.

In terms of entertainment possibilities as an influencing factor, 35.6% and 27.8% of total respondents most unimportantly and unimportantly influenced by entertainment

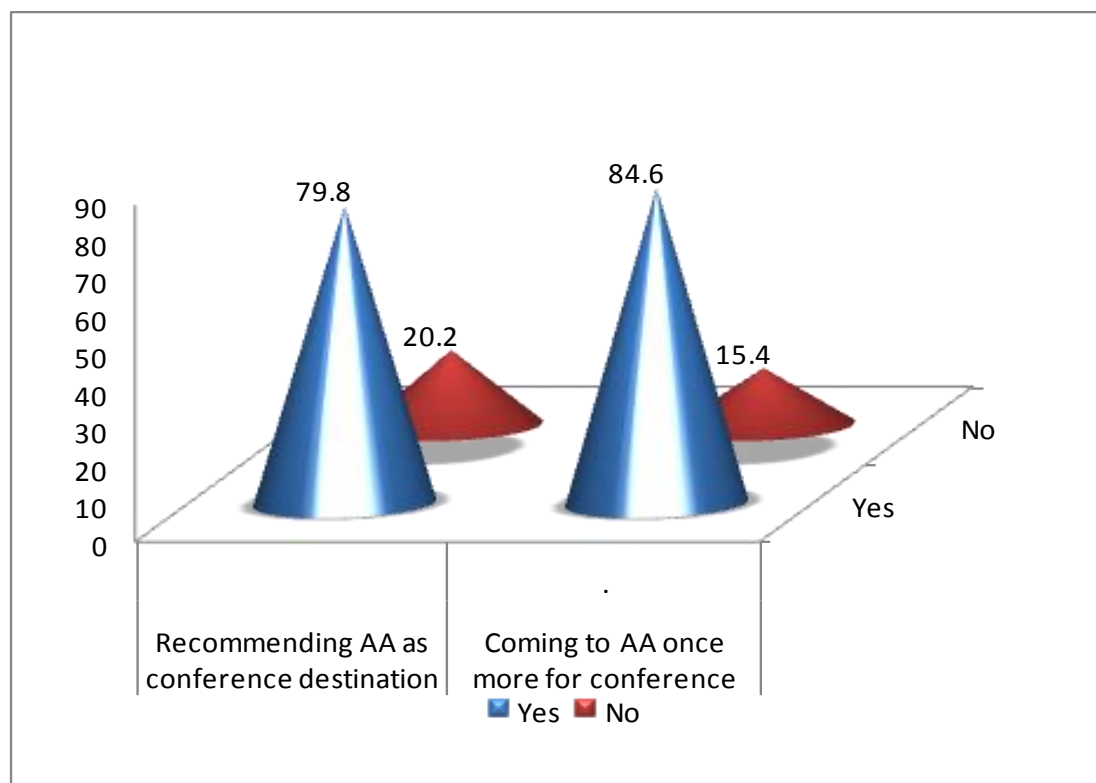
possibilities (theaters, dramas, theme-park, opera houses, music festivals, traditional cultural festivals, sport activities and so on) respectively. 63.4% of these respondents together, the availability of such tourist attractions could do nothing with conference tourism as an influencing factor for them, i.e. they paid no attention to these factors while choosing a destination for conference purposes. Nearly about one-fourth (23.7%) of those conference participants were neutrally coming to Addis Ababa where the availability of entertainment possibilities was neither considered as an influencing factor to choose Addis Ababa for conference activities. More than one-tenth (12.8%) of total conference participants were more importantly influenced by the availability of these entertainment possibilities before and they might take part in such entertainment possibilities when they have been in Addis Ababa. This indicates, out of 396 conference participants, only 51 of them were influenced and motivated to take part in the conferences to be held in Addis Ababa due to the presence of entertainment possibilities. Since they were too small in number, the amount of money expected to be spent with them on such entertainments was also small in this regard. Therefore, small economic benefits were gained apart from the money they spent for conference activities in Addis Ababa.

#### **4.5.4 Loyal Conference Participants**

The below figure 7 indicates, of the total sample surveyed, 79.8% conference participants responded as they would recommend Addis Ababa for their friends, families and any person or organization that would be in the position of requiring such information to host or participate on conferences held in Addis Ababa as their image about Ethiopia was greatly changed positively (see table 12). Apart from this, 20.2% of the remaining participants replied as they don't want to recommend Addis Ababa as a conference destination to nobody who's in need of such information. This was because of some of the participants' attitudes were not changed yet even after coming physically to Addis Ababa to attend the conferences perhaps. However, the majority of the conference participants promised to recommend Addis Ababa as a good conference destination to other conference participants, delegates or somebody else.

Regarding the participants' future repeat visit to Ethiopia, the majority of them were confident that they would come once more to visit the destination as their image of a

country was positively built through consuming quality services at the place. Nevertheless, 15.4% of the remaining respondents replied as they did not want to come to Addis Ababa then after. This implies, it might be those their images were negative at all about Addis Ababa/Ethiopia till then or those who were not comfortable with service providers and as well as with some irrelevant situations in relation to conference activities here in Addis Ababa.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Fig 7: Respondents' interest in coming to and recommending AA as a conference destination

## 4.6 Challenges of Conference Tourism

### 4.6.1 Challenges of Addis Ababa's Conference Sector

Above all, when interview questions were undertaken with key informants of conference organizers about the challenges of Ethiopia's conference tourism, particularly the challenges of Addis Ababa's conference tourism, they answered that lack of coordination between public and private sectors, lack of conference tourism awareness from other stakeholders including the government, absence of conference tourism curricula in different colleges and universities as a separate field of study subject, huge amount of

money required initially to start conference business and other related problems were made the growth of conference sector slow down in which not as such remarkable progresses haven't been seen in the development of conference industry in Addis Ababa yet. In case of entry visas for foreigners to come to Addis Ababa, the conference organizers need to deposit 2,000,000ETB in their bank account that is required by Ethiopian government to make them legally and officially recognized in bringing conference participants to attend the conferences organized in Addis Ababa. It was so difficult and tough to get Visa from the immigration office because it might take too much longer period of time to process visa on behalf of the client here in Addis Ababa. The other main challenge of conference tourism was the custom duties or high taxation levied at Bole International Airport on each and every imported equipments and materials that the conference participants brought here for promotional purposes (banners, LCD projector for presentations and others). However, such taxation at airport irritated and annoyed the conference participants not to come to Addis Ababa again for attending conferences. As a challenge, any of conference centers in Addis Ababa couldn't fulfill special facilities and equipments for those who in need of such assistants particularly, for the disabled persons. So that disabled persons didn't want to come to Addis Ababa for conference purposes.

A little attention was given to the industry from the government and private sectors. Limited foreign and domestic conference exposure and experiences in hosting large size conference attendees, absence of conference centers during peak seasons when various conferences are planned to be hosted in Addis Ababa simultaneously, inadequacy of hotel rooms in accommodating large numbers of conference participants, limited carrying capacities of conference rooms and insufficient space for car parking services were also challenges of conference tourism in Addis Ababa as interview questions were made with key informants of conference tourism stakeholders.

#### **4.7 Perceptions of Conference Participants**

##### **4.7.1 Conference participants' Image of Addis Ababa/Ethiopia**

Every traveler, be it conference participants or other types of visitors, to Ethiopia has his/her own image of the country which could be developed through various ways. In other words, people may know about a given country's attributes either through

information transmitted unintentionally, organic image or through the induced image, the image formed by promotions. Due to different reasons, the image of Africa has been distorted by the outsiders. Africans have begun building the image of the continent since then in unorganized way which eventually contributed in saving the continent from political and also economical oblivion. Ethiopia has not been an exception; because of famine, drought and civil war happened decades ago, the country has been stereotyped by the outsiders, particularly by westerns.

Accordingly, the participants' primary and secondary image of Ethiopia is clearly discussed in the below table 11. As it was indicated in this table, about 31.3% of the respondents had a negative image about the country in general before coming to the destination to attend conference. This could be due to the fact that they heard the past history of Ethiopia's famine, drought, and civil wars as a bad publicity at the time. Conversely, more than one-third (37.9) of the conference participants had a positive image of the country before experiencing the destination getting information about Ethiopia either from their friends and relatives or broadcasting or electronic media or other sources of information. The remaining 30.8% of respondents had neither positive nor negative secondary image of the country.

It, needless to say, is that the secondary image, image developed before travelling to the destination would probably be changed after experiencing it either positively or negatively. In such light, although the country is negatively imaged yet by some foreigners, the negative primary image of the country by participants has nearly declined by three folds (8.6%) compared to the negative secondary image of the destination. This implies that how much the destination is expected more in promoting its entire unique attributes at the world stage so as to build a good brand and positive secondary image of the country by simultaneously paying a great attention to offer services to its best not to deteriorate the image once built. Likewise, about 70% of respondents had developed positive image of Ethiopia after participating on the conferences held in Addis Ababa while this survey was undertaken though 21.5% of conference participants failed to develop either positive or negative image of the country after experiencing the destination. However, neutral participants' secondary image about Ethiopia decreased to respondents' primary image from 30.8% to 21.5%.

Generally, majority of surveyed respondents' perceptions/attitudes were positively changed in terms of the image they had about Addis Ababa/Ethiopia after they have experienced the true image of the country and as well as due to the presence of a variety of services in the destination especially, Addis Ababa as a conference destination.

Table: 11 Participants' Primary and secondary image of Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia

Image	VN		N		NT		P		VP	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Secondary Image	26	6.6	98	24.7	122	30.8	112	28.3	38	9.6
Primary Image	9	2.3	25	6.3	85	21.5	169	42.7	108	27.3

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Key: VN=Very Negative, N=Negative, NT=Neutral, P=Positive, VP=Very positive

In order to realize the statistical significant difference among conference participants who have come from different regions in terms of their primary image of Ethiopia especially Addis Ababa, ANOVA was run. In this light, as it's indicated in table 12 below, conference participants from Africa with a mean of 3.02, Europe (M=2. 81), North America (M=3. 25), South America with average mean of 3 and who are from other parts of the world whose mean exceeds Asia's participants (3.75 to 3.62) had a different secondary image of Addis Ababa, regardless of its direction, as statistically shown in table: 13 below;  $F(5, 395) = 3.543, p < 0.05$ .

Furthermore, the statistical significant difference among conference participants who came from different regions in terms of image they have created after experiencing Addis Ababa was employed. Accordingly, after their participation in different conferences held in Addis Ababa, the majority of the participants has gained, the true image of the country in general which was previously stereotyped (see table11).

Table 12: Primary image of Addis Ababa among conference participants from different regions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	20.086	5	4.017	3.543	<b>.004</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	442.267	390	1.134		
<b>Total</b>	462.354	395			

Source: Field Survey, 2015

As it is clearly indicated in table12, no difference was observed among conference participants from the Africa (M=3.82), Europe (M=4.06), North America (M=4.25, South America (M=3.75), Asia (M=3.92) and other parts of the globe (M=4.25).

Regarding their secondary image of the capital in particular though their average mean differ from one another. Statistically,  $F(5, 390) = .843, P > 0.05$ .

Table13: Secondary image difference of Addis Ababa among conference participants from different regions

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	3.920	5	.784	.843	<b>.520</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	362.716	390	.930		
<b>Total</b>	366.636	395			

Source: Field Survey, 2015

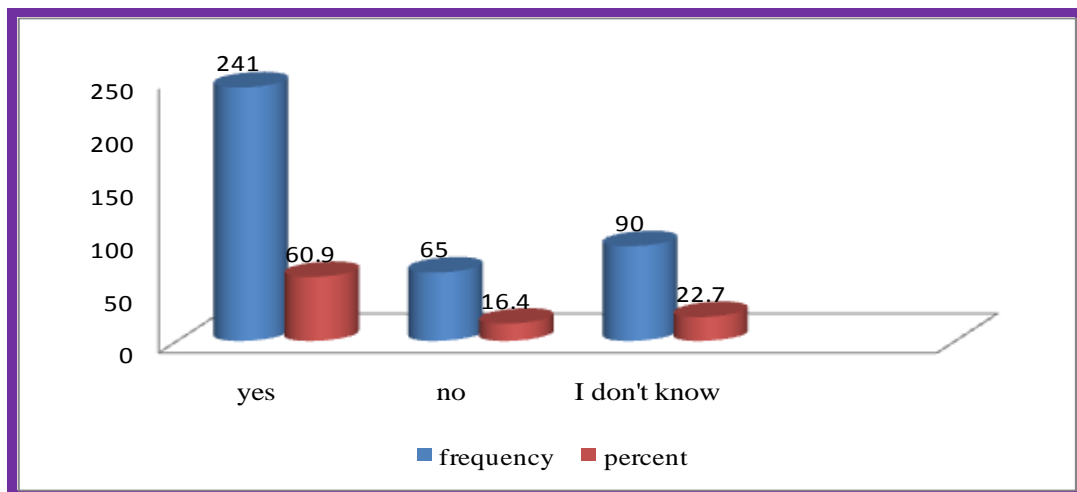
## 4.8 Conference Tourism in Building Destinations' Brand

### 4.8.1 Potential of Conference Tourism in Building Addis Ababa's Brand

From figure 8 below, 241 out of 396 samples survey replied conference tourism can build Addis Ababa destination's brand which accounted about 60.9%. This is the most

compelling optimism about the potential of the niche business of tourism in building the brand of Addis Ababa as a conference destination since majority of respondents had good international conference participation experience and repeated visit to Ethiopia (see table 14 and 15). Almost three times one-fifth of the total respondents responded various conference activities undertaken currently in Ethiopia, especially, conferences held in Addis Ababa on different issues have changed the negative impressions that Ethiopia experienced for a long period of time in the past decades because of drought, famine and civil wars. Even though small number of conferences were hosted in Addis Ababa, majority of conference participants who came to Addis Ababa were optimistic that conference tourism has the potential in building the image of the city and the country's too through different ways if the destination would maintain the mandatory pulling factors to host conferences in Addis Ababa as discussed in the table 9 and 10.

In return, Addis Ababa as a conference destination, upgrade and improve infrastructural developments and facilities so as to attract larger numbers of delegates and other conference participants from different corners of the world to the destination. Conference tourism stakeholders, especially conference planners and organizers, were utterly optimistic about the potential of this emerging tourism business in revitalizing the image of the country and in building the strong and unique brand of Addis Ababa at international market which is in line with majority of conference participants' view (Interview: March, 2015).



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Fig 8: The role of Conference in building Addis Ababa's brand destination

According to these key informants, conference tourism can build destination image because of which larger numbers of conference attendees came to the destination with foreign currency and would spend their money into the local economy. As many conference participants preferred to make Addis Ababa as their conference destination, in one way or another, these conference attendees would get so many experiences about the city's overall conference activities while they were at the destination. Even if the term destination brand was a new concept and none of these conference stakeholders had experiences of participation on developing a unique destination brand that differentiates Addis Ababa city from other competitors as a conference destination, Mr. Ayele from AACoC replied "as he tried to give unspeakable efforts and dedications for the commencement of Ethiopia's conference industry from its infant stage". He has delivered some short-term training on conference for hotels, government offices and private companies, NGO's, tourism colleges and universities at different times for awareness programs in which conference activities started to flourish here in Ethiopia since then.

Numerically, 22.7% out of total respondents replied 'I don't know' that neither of them knew whether conference tourism builds Addis Ababa's brand destination. These types of respondents were probably those neutral and remained silent in this regard than answering the questions on the fig 8. However, for those who answered the survey questionnaire of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand destination 'No' accounted about 16.4% out of total respondents.

#### **4.8.2 Participants' experience of International conferences**

Out of the total surveyed conference participants, the majority of them have had travel experiences to Ethiopia with the exclusion of their latest participation on the conference held in Addis Ababa. Numerically, 65.7% of the sample respondents had visited Ethiopia before while their counterparts, who participated in a conference held by the time this survey was undertaken, came to Ethiopia for the first time without having any travel experience to the country.

As it was stated in table 14 below, about one-third of the sample respondents have visited Ethiopia for more than four times. Around half of the respondents had a good travel experience to the country coming for two and three times while the remaining 15% of sample participants appeared once before the latest conference which they were

participating on. Specifically, regarding to the frequency of participation of respondents in conferences held in Ethiopia, about 62.6% of them had participated more than one while the remaining 37.4% of respondents had never participated on a conference held in Addis Ababa before.

Table: 14 Frequency of visit

<b>Is it your first visit * Frequency of visit</b>							
			<b>Frequency of visit</b>				<b>Total</b>
			<b>One</b>	<b>Two</b>	<b>Three</b>	<b>Four and above</b>	
<b>Is it your first visit?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Count</b>	39	59	75	87	260
		<b>%</b>	15.0%	22.7%	28.8%	33.5%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

However, they might have had experience participating in conferences held in different parts of the world.

Table 15 Conference Participation in Addis Ababa and other country

<b>Participated More Than One Conference in AA</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Yes	248	62.6	62.6
No	148	37.4	37.4
Total	396	100.0	100.0
<b>Participation On Conference In Another Country</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Yes	304	76.8	76.8
No	92	23.2	23.2
Total	396	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes about the result findings of the study that have been gone through chapter 4. It also gives some conclusions from the result findings and discussions depending upon the research's questions and objectives. Finally, it suggests some future recommendations on important issues that should be done and taken into consideration by concerned bodies accordingly.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The study has gone some way towards on assessing the role of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination.

Through the study findings, the stakeholder involvement as key actors in the conference industry today here in Addis Ababa were not satisfactory. Particularly, the involvement degree of conference organizers with one another and with government, interms of coordination and collaboration in organizing success full conferences were not as such significant.

As stakeholders, when compared to UNECA, the AU, travel agencies, AACoC and privately owned conference organizing companies brought small percentage of conference participants to Addis Ababa as their involvement in conference industry were minimal too. Even if there was no a such strong connection and coordination with other stakeholders, UNECA played significant roles in bringing larger numbers of conference participants to Addis Ababa than the combinations of other conference organizers.

The fear of to be out of conference business in the mind of some private conference organizers were another area of problem that made them to be far apart from one another to run the businesses in a very less magnitude and in return, as stakeholders, participated in conference tourism with very less involvement accordingly. In addition, the conference organizers didn't let the conference participants know more about Ethiopia/ Addis Ababa in motivating them to undertake some trips ahead of the conference or after the conference by arranging tour programs to different tourist attractions with the help of tour operation companies. In this regard, no satisfactory jobs were done.

Most of the time, they wanted to do their jobs individually rather than working together for common goals to host mega conferences on different issues. This was due to the problem of having no professional competencies or trainings in the field of conference sector. Consequently, organizers organize conferences in such a fragmented condition in which conference organizers didn't have a connection with other key stakeholders (travel agents, car rental companies, hotel and its) and even weak cooperation among the conference organizers themselves.

Though much degree of stakeholder involvement was expected, there were less degree of key stakeholders involvement and limitations in the conference industry in this regard. As a result, the dedication, coordination and cooperation of stakeholders' involvement and commitment in working together for common goals were not a satisfactory. Due to low stakeholders' involvement in the conference sector, they were unable to bring radical changes in boosting the current Ethiopia's conference industry dramatically.

A given destination can be benefited from the activities of conference tourism and conference tourism can bring so many opportunities for the destination. When various conferences are hosted, the destination will be advantageous in a number of ways. For instance, when numbers of conference participants are planning to come to Addis Ababa, economically, the destination will be benefited from the money they spent for different purposes as personal expenditures, which include: accommodation cost, catering, transportation cost, gift products and etc. In terms of all these, some amounts of hard currencies were highly gained so as to catalyze and speed up the economic growth of the city being a conference destination. Economically, Addis Ababa is benefiting more from conference participants who need to stay in Addis Ababa for many days or many nights time period. The more numbers of nights, the more foreign currencies were spent and the better the destination will be in terms of economy.

Conference tourism could also create huge job opportunities for employees that are working in this industry. However, in terms of Addis Ababa, those who currently enrolled as permanent employees in the conference sector were few in numbers. Certainly, when large numbers of conference attendees were in Addis Ababa sometimes the casual staffs might be called especially in the area of catering services. While conferences are being held in Addis Ababa, those stakeholders, whether large or small,

governmentally or privately owned companies including the individuals might get the opportunities to be part of the conference either as core employees or service providers (supportive staffs). By doing so, conference tourism directly or indirectly injected foreign hard currencies into the destination's economy. Even if seasonality is the main challenge of tourism and travel industry elsewhere in the today's world, conference tourism can alleviate such seasonality problems if the destination has the capacity to host various conferences throughout the year at a time. Therefore, conference tourism plays noteworthy roles in boosting destination's economy and serves as the power gear of the local economy in this regard.

The presence of international and intercontinental conference centers of UNECA and AU is another opportunity. Since the headquarters of these two organizations is located in Addis Ababa, various conference issues might be brought and hosted in the city. Along this, as many as conferences frequently hosted, new conference participants might get the chance to be part of the conference that positively changes their attitude about Addis Ababa in particular.

Apart from the political instability, unrest and terrorism elsewhere in the world, Addis Ababa maintained the political stability and security incidentally. Hence, Addis Ababa is considered to be safe when compared to other African Countries in terms of peace and security. Thus, this chance has given Addis Ababa the opportunity to be a preferable conference destination in hosting various conferences currently.

However, there are so many challenges negatively affected the day to day activities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. The main challenge in this context was the bureaucracy of immigration office in processing visa requirements for the participants. It would take a longer period of time, even sometimes more than three months to have an entry visa as an international travel document that legalizes somebody to enter into the country to attend conference for particular days. When visa processes were delayed due to such bureaucracies, conference participants who need to attend the conference or who plan to organize some conferences in Addis Ababa immediately canceled their confirmation. In addition, it requires 2 million Birr to pass through the processes and getting access to have the license. Another challenge of conference tourism from the government body was the problem related to custom duties on imported items. Up on

arrival at Bole International Airport, it was mandatory for conference participants to pay taxes levied by customs authority for the products or materials they came with to the destination even for banners. Such activities somehow made them upset and couldn't invite them to come again for conferences to be hosted in Addis Ababa as a conference destination.

There were limitations of conference venues when different numbers of conferences are thought to be hosted on various issues at the same time here in Addis Ababa. Due to the inadequacy of such conference venues, there were cancellations of some conferences that have been planned to be hosted in Addis Ababa. Consequently, the chances of hosting such conferences were taken from and given to the other competing countries in which Addis Ababa has been losing tremendous opportunities in this regard.

Weak coordination and cooperation among conference tourism stakeholders' were another area of challenge in conference tourism. The conference organizers, tour operators, car rental companies, hotel establishments, concerned government bodies, individuals and other stakeholders do not have strong cooperation to work together for the overall growth of conference industry. Besides, the attention given by the government to the conference industry was also too low. The government couldn't impose the concerned bodies (colleges and universities) to incorporate the curricula of conference tourism as a separate field of study. That was the reason why most conference planners here in Addis Ababa run conference businesses unprofessionally but through experiences.

The secondary image of conference participants was changed from negative to positive images after experiencing the true image of Addis Ababa during their stay in the destination. Greater numbers of conference participants had already positive image about Addis Ababa before coming which were positively increased from the secondary image (37.9%) to more positive primary image (70%) by 32.1%. About 30.8% of those who had neither positive nor negative image about Ethiopia/Addis Ababa before coming reduced to 21.5% after visiting Addis Ababa as a conference destination which was positively increased by 9.3%. More importantly, 31.3% of Conference participants those who had a negative image about Ethiopia /Addis Ababa before coming have been greatly reduced to 8.8% so that their primary image was dramatically increased by 22.7% to positive images.

Despite the fact that, 84.6% of conference participants need to come again to attend conferences to be hosted in the future once more and 79.8% of them promised to recommend Addis Ababa to their friends, families, other organizations or somebody else who needs to attend or organize conferences here in Addis Ababa as a good conference destination. Furthermore, 60.9% of conference participants replied that conference can build the destination brand. Due to the combination factors of the participants' secondary negative image were greatly changed to positive image, greater numbers of participants interested to come again and willingly recommend the destination to others will make Addis Ababa a good conference destination. Most importantly, there was no image difference among primary conference participants after visiting Addis Ababa as per the result of ANOVA. Their images about Ethiopia/Addis Ababa were completely changed to positive images. Therefore, conference tourism has the potential to build Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Conference tourism cannot exist in isolation; it is the cooperation and active involvement of different stakeholders that could capitalize the pleasant impacts of the sector. The transport sector, the accommodation sector, government, tour operation and travel agencies, embassies, NGO's, conference organizers, Media conference centers and others were some of stakeholders. Even if stakeholders were available in Addis Ababa, the significant roles played by these key stakeholders for the growth of conference tourism was relatively minimal. In addition, the coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders were strongly weak.

The presence of AU and UNECA as an intercontinental and international conference center here in Addis Ababa gave the opportunity to the city to bring so many conference participants from different corners of the world to the destination since the past four decades. Maintaining the political stability/security along with good quality of services, Addis Ababa is currently serving as a home for both international and intercontinental conferences.

However, there are still some challenges that limited conference tourism not to play significant roles to build Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination due to the lack of professionalism in the conference sector and low attention given by the government, concerned bodies and other related problems in this regard.

Regardless of international conference participants' perception about the country in general and Addis Ababa as a conference destination in particular were nicely positive. Most importantly, after they experienced and gained the true image of the city/country through the conference tourism, their negative image that they have had about before coming comparatively changed into positive. Besides, the image of the city/country can easily be enhanced and positioned. Therefore, conference tourism can heavily build the Addis Ababa's brand as a conference destination.

## 5.2 Recommendation

Reasonable recommendations are forwarded based on the findings of this research to enhance the growth of conference industry in Addis Ababa particularly.

- While organizing conferences, all conference tourism stakeholders (government, private conference organizing companies, tour operators, hotels, car rental companies and other stakeholders) should effectively and cooperatively work together in advancing and stepping forward the conference industry for common goals and benefits rather than separately run the business individually in fragmented and unusual ways. Those conference organizers, including the government and non-governmental conference organizers and conference centers should extensively market Addis Ababa as a conference destination by using different promotional tools to bring larger numbers of conference participants from different corner of the world. Huge efforts must be done to bring together the government and conference organizers so as to strengthen the commitment and dedication of each of these stakeholders for the growth of conference industry in Addis Ababa. Moreover, the network of interaction and coordination among the stakeholders has to be developed therefore they can share experiences. The government has to facilitate the conditions in which new conference organizers are encouraged to be part of the industry. More importantly, conference organizers should have to work with tour operators to arrange and prepare tour programs or itineraries for the conference participants before or after the conferences that will give them the chance to visit and explore the destination precisely. Each stakeholder including the government should plan and participate in the brand destination development programs extensively and cooperatively as destination branding requires involvement of professionals from local authorities and tourist organizations, as well as the support of the local community in a long-term destination strategy that makes destination branding easier. The employees of hotel industry must cooperate in giving necessary information as required that can be considered as an input in gathering such important information in the development of conference industry.
- In terms of opportunities, the conference organizers have to work to involve skilled manpower and creating job opportunities for the locals. The government

and conference organizers must give due attention to encourage and upgrade conference tourism to boost and enhance the local economy. To minimize the effect of seasonality, conference tourism should be encouraged to sustain the economy of the destination accordingly. All stakeholders and members of the society must inclusively strive to maintain destination's peace and security to make Addis Ababa the most preferable conference destination. They have to also strive to excel service qualities in the country in any direction. Ethiopian Airline Company ought to work on greater effort to connect Ethiopia/ Addis Ababa to other parts of the world to bring many conference participants to Addis Ababa as a conference destination. The destination has to develop willingness, commitments and dedications in hosting small, medium and large international and continental conferences throughout the year.

- Regardless of challenges of conference tourism, the government should overcome bureaucracy problems and have to be flexible in visa processing and as much as possible, allow duty free for ease imported materials and equipments accompanied with conference tourism. Together, all stakeholders must develop strong cooperation and coordination among themselves to build additional and standardized conference centers in Addis Ababa to overcome inadequate conference venue problems particularly during the peak seasons. The government should give due attention to conference tourism that the stakeholders and concerned bodies shall work together to incorporate the curricula of conference tourism as a field of study in colleges and universities that makes conference organizers more professionals than organizing it through experiences.
- Greater efforts should be done in the area of marketing and promotion to encourage and motivate more participants to come to Addis Ababa for conference purposes. Specially, more attention must be given to secondary conference participants to change their negative images that they had about Ethiopia/Addis Ababa before coming to positive images. By doing so, they can get the true image of Addis Ababa in experiencing the destination more about. Many conferences have to be hosted in Addis Ababa throughout the year which bring various conference issues to Addis Ababa accordingly. Those conference organizers should also strive to bring many international and continental conferences to

Addis Ababa with the help of government and other stakeholders. As such, the image of Ethiopia/Addis Ababa could possibly be changed to more positive images within the coming few years. More qualified level of services, more standardized and equipped conference centers and other related; influencing factors of destination choice should be effectively maintained to build more and more Addis Ababa's destination brand.

- Since there overall has been little research performed in the field of destination branding from the conference perspective, more extensive studies are indeed welcomed on the topic. While this study took a specific approach, it is suggested that future studies focus on wider in scope within the context of destination brand identity building will be done. Further studies on how conferences linked to the destination's brand and as well as the impact of conferences in the tourism industry and community, such as the social, cultural and economic impacts are recommended to be undertaken in Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa in particular.

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# Appendixes



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT  
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES**

Dear Sir/Madam!

This questionnaire is an invitation to consider your participation in the study. I am conducting research as part of the Masters of Art in Marketing Management at School of Commerce, Addis Ababa University under the supervision of Dr. Getie Andualem.

My research title is: *“Assessing the role of conference tourism in building Addis Ababa’s brand as a conference destination: from stakeholders’ & international conference participants’ perspective”*. As a result, the questionnaire is targeted to conference participants who have been in Addis Ababa. Thus, it asks about your experience during your stay in Addis Ababa regarding the destination image, perceived quality of services and the overall activity of conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

I would ask you to take a few minutes of your time for filling out this questionnaire and all the information you will provide is considered confidential and data will be used

**EXCLUSIVELY** for the needs of this research.

Thank you in advance for your Cooperation!

Sincerely,

Bekele Uma

+251924849505

E-mail: [bekiykoo@gmail.com](mailto:bekiykoo@gmail.com)

*If you would like to receive a copy of this research, please state your e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_*

**PART I: Respondents' general profiles**

*You are kindly requested to put 'circle' for your answer to the questions provided below.*

1. Region of residence:

- |           |                  |           |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| 1. Africa | 3. North America | 5. Asia   |
| 2. Europe | 4. South America | 6. Others |

2. What is your employment status?

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. Employed      | 4. Student |
| 2. Self-employed | 5. Other   |
| 3. Retired       |            |

3. Sex:            1. Male            2. Female

4. Which Airlines did you use for flight to Ethiopia to attend the conference?

- |                       |                            |                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Ethiopian Airlines | 2. Other country's Airline | 3. Private jet |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|

5. Where did you hear about this conference destination from? (More answers are possible)

1. Media (both internet and broadcasting).
2. Friends and relatives.
3. Printed Media.
4. Others( travel agents, trade fair and etc)

6. Is this your first visit to this conference destination?    1. Yes            2. No

7. If your answer to question #6 is "NO", how many times have you visited Addis Ababa before?            1. One            2. Two            3. Three            4. Four and more

8. How many nights are you planning to stay in Addis Ababa?

- |        |        |          |                  |
|--------|--------|----------|------------------|
| 1. One | 2. Two | 3. Three | 4. Four and more |
|--------|--------|----------|------------------|

9. Was your trip to this conference destination organized by:

- |                  |                     |                                   |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. African Union | 2. Event organizers | 3. Economic commission for Africa |
| 4. Travel Agency | 5. Others           |                                   |

10. How much money (USD) do you plan to spend per person during your stay?

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. < 300\$       | 3. \$601- 1000\$ |
| 2. \$300 - 600\$ | 4. > 1001\$      |

11. Was your expense whilst staying at this conference destination to be:

1. Within what was planned.
2. Higher than planned.
3. Lower than planned.

12. When being in Addis Ababa, do you travel with:

1. Public transport      3. Taxi                      5. Transport Provided by a conference organizer  
 2. Rented car              4. On foot

**PART II: Evaluation of services, influencing factors and overall image of the destination**

13. How do you evaluate the services offered during your stay in Addis Ababa? (evaluate from 1 to 5)

Services offered	Measurement scale				
	Very poor	Poor	No opinion	Good	Very good
13A. Transportation within Addis Ababa:	1	2	3	4	5
13B. Accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
13C. Availability of Tourist information	1	2	3	4	5
13D. Level of service & quality of food in restaurants/cafes	1	2	3	4	5
13E. Convenience of the conference venue	1	2	3	4	5

14. Have you been to more than one conference in Addis Ababa? 1. Yes 2. No
15. Have the practical aspects of the conference been organized as you expected?  
1. Worse than expected 2. As expected 3. Better than expected
16. How much the following factors were important in influencing your choice of Addis Ababa as a conference destination? Please, evaluate from 1 to 5.

Factors of influence choices	Measurement scale				
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important
16A. Price level	1	2	3	4	5
16B. Safety	1	2	3	4	5
16C. Geographical location	1	2	3	4	5
16D. Recommendations	1	2	3	4	5
16E. Image of a country	1	2	3	4	5
16F. Availability of event organizers	1	2	3	4	5
16G. Availability of conference hall & facilities	1	2	3	4	5
16H. Due to Addis Ababa is the seat of the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa & others	1	2	3	4	5
16I. Cultural and historic heritage	1	2	3	4	5
16J. Entertainment possibilities	1	2	3	4	5

17. What image do you have about Ethiopia as a conference destination? Evaluate from 1 to 5.

Overall image of the country	Measurement scale				
	Very negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very positive
17A. What image of Ethiopia did you have before coming here?	1	2	3	4	5
17B. What image of Ethiopia do you have now?	1	2	3	4	5

18. Will you recommend Addis Ababa as a good conference destination to your friends/colleagues?  
1. Yes 2. NO

19. Based on question #18, if your answer is No, why?

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20. Would you like to come to Addis Ababa to participate in conferences once more?  
1. Yes 2. No

21. Based on question #20, if your answer is No, why?

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**22.** Would you think that conference tourism can build Addis Ababa's destination brand?

1. Yes      2. No      3. I don't know

**23.** Based on question # 22, if your answer is yes, how?

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**24.** Why do you prefer to participate in the conference that hosted in Addis Ababa?

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**25.** Have you participated in conferences that have been hosted in other country than Addis Ababa/Ethiopia?    1. Yes      2. No

**26.** Based on question # 25, if your answer is yes, state the experiences you have got in Addis Ababa.

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**27.** In your opinion, how do you explain the activities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa?

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**28.** What slogan would you suggest that can represent Addis Ababa as a conference destination?

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### **Interview questions for stakeholders**

This interview is designed to obtain information from stakeholders in terms of: marketing strategies, coordination & stakeholders' unity in building AA's brand destination in the area of conference tourism. You will be presented with a series of closed & open ended questions and the decision to answer each question is your own. However, your contribution in answering as many questions as possible so as to provide important information would be greatly appreciated.

**Q1-** Name of your organization:

**Q2-** How many people are working in the organization?

**Q3-** What are your organization's vision, values, mission, goals and objectives?

**Q4** Do you have a participative role in organizing any conferences hosted in Addis Ababa before?

Yes / No     If Yes, to what extent are you involved?

**Q5-** Do you believe that conferences hosted in Addis Ababa is managed effectively by both public and private sectors?     Yes/ No     Reasons?

**Q6-** Please list stakeholder/stakeholder groups that you are working most closely with while organizing conferences?

**Q7-** What kind of marketing tools does your organization use in the conference industry? (Distribution channels, direct marketing, PR, internet etc.)

**Q8-** For you, what is destination's identity?

**Q9-** Do you believe Addis Ababa/Ethiopia has a good Image? Yes/ No     Reason?

**Q10-** Have you been participating in developing the brand identity of AA as a tourist destination?

Yes/ No.     If so, in which way?

**Q11-** What slogan would you suggest that can represent Addis Ababa as a conference destination?

**Q12-** As part of stakeholder in the conference industry, how do you see your effort in making Addis Ababa as a conference destination?

- Q13-** How many International & continental conferences have been hosted by your organization in Addis Ababa per year?
- Q14-** What do you perceive as the main challenges of organizing conferences in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia as a conference destination?
- Q15-** what are the opportunities and benefits of conference tourism for Addis Ababa as a tourist destination?
- Q16.** How do you evaluate the government policy to wards the conference industry in terms of regulation, incentives, training and other supports?

### Field observation check list

No.	Conference facilities	Conference centers			
		Availability of facilities in AU		Availability of facilities in UNCC	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
1	Secretarial services		X	✓	
2	Photocopier and Printer		X	✓	
3	Color Printer and Stationary.		X	✓	
4	Digital recording CDs, DVDs and flash,		X		X
5	Projector	✓		✓	
6	Screen	✓		✓	
7	Laptop	✓		✓	
8	CD and DVD players		X		X
9	Digital audio recorder		X		X
10	Overhead projector for both transparencies and paper	✓		✓	
11	Whiteboards	✓		✓	
12	Blackboards		X		X
13	Computers and Printers.		X	✓	
14	Telephone.		X		X
15	Fax service		X	✓	
16	Gym ,Tennis courts and basket ball	✓		✓	
17	Jogging in the park and gardens.	✓			X
18	Swimming pool		X		X
19	Special requirements for disabilities		X		X

20	Video conferencing	✓		✓	
21	Refreshment	✓		✓	
22	Parking services	✓		✓	
23	Conference room with pleasant decor	✓		✓	
24	Internet access /Wireless connection	✓		✓	
25	Bottled Water	✓		✓	
26	Photograph service	✓		✓	

### Worldwide rankings: number of meetings per world countries

Rank	Country	#Meetings 2013
1	U.S.A.	829
2	Germany	722
3	Spain	562
4	France	527
5	United Kingdom	525
6	Italy	447
7	Japan	342
8	China-P.R.	340
9	Brazil	315
10	Netherlands	302
11	Canada	290
12	Republic of Korea	260
13	Portugal	249
14	Austria	244
15	Sweden	238
16	Australia	231
17	Argentina	223
18	Turkey	221
19	Belgium	214
20	Switzerland	205
	<b>Switzerland Convention &amp; Incentive Bureau (SCIB)</b>	<b><a href="http://www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings">www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings</a></b>
21	Singapore	175
22	Finland	171
23	Poland	170
24	Denmark	161
25	Mexico	158
26	Czech Republic	145
27	India	142
28	Colombia	139
29	Ireland	136
	<b>Meet in Ireland - National Tourist Board</b>	<b><a href="http://www.meetinireland.com">www.meetinireland.com</a></b>
	Norway	136
	Thailand	136
32	Hungary	132
33	Chinese Taipei	122
34	South Africa	118
	<b>South African Tourism: Convention Bureau</b>	<b><a href="http://www.businessevents.southafrica.net">www.businessevents.southafrica.net</a></b>
35	Malaysia	117
36	Chile	110
37	Indonesia	106

Rank	Country	#Meetings 2013
38	Greece	100
39	Hong Kong, China-P.R.	89
40	Russia	83
41	Croatia	69
42	Serbia	66
43	Peru	64
44	United Arab Emirates	62
	Uruguay	62
46	Panama	61
47	Lithuania	57
	Slovenia	57
49	Philippines	53
50	Vietnam	52
51	New Zealand	48
52	Romania	44
53	Ecuador	42
54	Israel	40
55	Estonia	38
	Kenya	38
57	Bulgaria	36
58	Latvia	35
59	Iceland	33
	Slovak Republic	33
	<b>Slovak Tourist Board/Slovak Convention Bureau</b>	<b><a href="http://www.slovakconvention.sk">www.slovakconvention.sk</a></b>
61	Morocco	30
62	Guatemala	27
63	Malta	26
64	Costa Rica	25
65	Cyprus	23
	Luxembourg	23
	Paraguay	23
68	Puerto Rico	20
	Qatar	20
70	Dominican Republic	19
71	Cuba	18
	Tunisia	18
	Venezuela	18
74	Bolivia	17
	Egypt	17
	Ghana	17
	Sri Lanka	17

Rank	Country	#Meetings 2013
78	Macao, China-P.R.	16
79	Form.Yugosl.Rep.Macedonia	15
	Ukraine	15
81	Monaco	13
	Trinidad & Tobago, W.I.	13
83	Nigeria	12
	Saudi Arabia	12
	Tanzania	12
	Uganda	12
87	Bosnia-Hercegovina	11
88	Oman	10
	Senegal	10
90	El Salvador	9
	Honduras	9
	Lebanon	9
93	Ethiopia	8
	Zambia	8
95	Botswana	7
	Georgia	7
	Jamaica	7
	Montenegro	7
	Zimbabwe	7
100	Albania	6
	Iran	6
	Kazakhstan	6
	Netherlands Antilles	6
104	Cambodia	5
	Cameroon	5
	Gabon	5
	Ivory Coast	5
	Jordan	5
	Laos	5
	Mauritius	5
	Mozambique	5
	Myanmar	5
	Namibia	5
	Other	102
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,685</b>

**Source:** International Association Meetings Market 2013', International congress and convention Association (website: [www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com))

**African rankings: number of meetings per African countries (2013)**

Rank	Country	#Meetings 2013
1	South Africa	118
2	Kenya	38
3	Morocco	30
4	Tunisia	18
5	Egypt	17
	Ghana	17
7	Nigeria	12
	Tanzania	12
	Uganda	12
10	Senegal	10
11	Ethiopia	8
	Zambia	8
13	Botswana	7
	Zimbabwe	7
15	Cameroon	5
	Gabon	5
	Ivory Coast	5
	Mauritius	5
	Mozambique	5
	Namibia	5
21	Rwanda	4
	Sudan	4
	Togo	4
24	Algeria	2
	Angola	2
	Congo	2
	Gambia	2
	Malawi	2
	Mauritania	2
30	Burundi	1
	Cape Verde	1
	Lesotho	1
	Madagascar	1
	Mali	1
	Niger	1
	Sierra Leone	1
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>375</b>

**Source:** International Association Meetings Market 2013', International congress and convention Association (website: [www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com))

**African rankings: number of meetings per African cities (2013)**

Rank	City	#Meetings 2013
1	Cape Town	45
2	Durban	25
3	Nairobi	24
4	Johannesburg	18
	Marrakech	18
6	Accra	17
7	Dakar	10
	Mombasa	10
	Pretoria	10
10	Arusha	9
	Cairo	9
	Stellenbosch	9
	Tunis	9
14	Abuja	8
	Addis Ababa	8
16	Casablanca	7
	Gaborone	7
	Sharm el Sheikh	7
19	Kampala	6
20	Hammamet	5
	Libreville	5
	Maputo	5
	Windhoek	5
	Other	101
	<b>Totals**</b>	<b>377</b>

\*\* Please note that the total of the city ranking is higher than the total of the country ranking, because events sometimes take place in more than one city.

**Source:** International Association Meetings Market 2013', International congress and convention Association (website: [www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com))

**የመጀመሪያዎቹ 20 አስገብኛ ድርጅቶች በ2003 እና በ2004 በአስገብት የውጭ**

**ምንዛሪ**

ተ.ቁ	የድርጅቱ ስም	የቱሪስት ብዛት	ያስገባው የውጭ ምንዛሪ		ጠቅላላ ገቢ	
			የ2003	የ2004	በአሜሪካ ዶላር	ኢ.ሮ
2	ክብራን ጀነራል ቢዝነስ ኃ.የተ.የግ.ግሀ	5080	2,067,950 USD	1,747,155.9 USD	3,815,105.9	
1	ድንቅነሽ ኢትዮጵያ አስገብኛ	2766	1,412,239.78 USD 238,490.57 Euro	1,629,155.59 USD 164,584.46 Euro	3,041,394	403,074
3	ግራንት ኤክስፕሪስ አስገብኛና የጉዞ ወኪል ኃ.የተ.የግ.ግሀ	3808	1,414,560 USD	1,618,009.86 USD 75,949 Euro	3,032,569	75,949
4	ትራቭል ኢትዮጵያ አስገብኛ	2587	1,529,178.75 USD	1,554,090 USD	3,083,268.9	5
5	ምድር አስገብኛ ድርጅት	1070	216,501.50 Euro 387,436 USD	775,250.75 USD 31,846 Euro	2,242,540	419,282
6	ግሪን ላንድ	6225	218,0547.29	136,4745.05	2,317,021	210,62

	<i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>		<i>USD</i> <i>163,486.03</i> <i>Euro</i>	<i>USD</i> <i>47,140 Euro</i>		<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>ጃካራንዳ</i> <i>አስጎብኚና የጉዞ</i> <i>ወኪል</i> <i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>	<i>3200</i>	<i>1700,000 USD</i>	<i>1800.000</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>3,500,000</i>	
<i>8</i>	<i>ካራቫን ጉዞና</i> <i>አስጎብኚ ወኪል</i>	<i>685</i>	<i>105,9433 USD</i> <i>387,265 Euro</i>	<i>492,656.71</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>1,552,089</i>	<i>387,26</i> <i>5</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>ኢትዮጵያን</i> <i>ኳድራንትስ</i> <i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>	<i>678</i>	<i>100,2460.5</i> <i>USD</i> <i>6006 Euro</i>	<i>979,782.67</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>1,982,242</i>	<i>6006</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>ሌስ ትራቭል</i> <i>ኢትዮጵያ</i> <i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>	<i>1932</i>	<i>938,395</i> <i>4100 Euro</i>	<i>883,650</i> <i>7700 Euro</i>	<i>1,822,048</i>	<i>11,800</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>ሌክ ጣና አስጎብኚ</i>	<i>1151</i>	<i>976,285.35USD</i>	<i>713,608.75U</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>1,689,893</i>	
<i>12</i>	<i>ሀዳር አስጎብኚ</i> <i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>	<i>703</i>	<i>631,235.79</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>665470.94</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>1,296,705</i>	
<i>13</i>	<i>ኢትዮጵያን ሪፍት</i> <i>ቫሊ ሳፋሪ</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>127,5005 USD</i>	<i>14795.39</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>1,289,800</i>	
<i>14</i>	<i>ሬድ ጃካል</i> <i>አስጎብኚ ድርጅት</i> <i>ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህ</i>	<i>624</i>	<i>635,439 USD</i>	<i>569678.15</i> <i>USD</i>	<i>1,205,117</i>	

15	ቴዲ ቱር	1066	249,400 USD	833,901.36 USD	1,083,301	
16	አዶናይ አስጎንኝ	537	344,186 Euro 76,709 USD	273,940 Euro 82,762 USD	159,471 USD	618,12 6 Euro
17	ስማይሊንግ ኢትዮጵያ አስጎብኝና የገዞ ወኪል ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማሀ	551	288,103 Euro	326448 Euro		614,55 1Euro
18	ጮራ አስጎብኝ (ሉዊጂ ካንታሚሳ)	412	383,169.8 USD	435492 USD	818,661	
19	ፓራዳይዝ ኢትዮጵያ ትራቭል	583	273,450.91 USD	311533 USD 52534 Euro	584983	52,534
20	ግዮን ቱርና ትራቭል ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማሀ	988	243,550 USD	439,677.6 USD	683,227 USD	
21	ስፕሌንደር ኢትዮጵያ አስጎብኝ ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማሀ	391	373.2100 USD	179,927.99 USD	553,027	
22	ቪሌጅ ኢትዮጵያ አስጎብኝ	275	250,880 USD	257,702.27 USD	508,582.27	

23	ዩዋ አስተባባሪ ኃ.የተ.የግ.ግህ	320	277,556 USD	222,668 USD	500,424	
24	ሩትስ አስተባባሪ የጉዞ ወኪል	439	301,589 USD	158,600 USD  68100 Euro	460,189	68100