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## **Trade and Development Board**

### **Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget**

Sixty-first session

Geneva, 25–29 June 2012

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

### **Review of the implementation of UNCTAD's communications strategy and publications policy**

## **Report on the readership survey of main publications of UNCTAD in 2011**

### *Executive Summary*

UNCTAD's publications policy provides that the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget review the results of a survey of publications issued during the previous year. For this fourth systematic survey, seven publications were selected. A brief and user-friendly online questionnaire was disseminated, which contained multiple rating responses to the following attributes, on a scale of 1 to 5: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) analytical quality; (c) enhancement of readers' understanding of issues; (d) assessment of policy conclusions; and (e) presentation. The total number of responses to the questionnaires was 183, of which approximately 21 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 41 per cent with academic and research institutions, 29 per cent from the private sector, 3 per cent from non-governmental organizations, and the rest from international organizations, the media, public enterprises and others. The results showed that the readers rated the publications very positively, the average for the overall assessment being 4.2. The overall average for analytical quality, enhancement of understanding and presentation attributes was 4.1 and the overall average for policy conclusions was 4. The average ratings of attributes for individual publications ranged from 3.8 to 4.4.

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## I. Mandate and purpose of the readership survey

1. UNCTAD's publications policy provides that the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget review the results of a survey of publications issued during the previous year, as well as any in-depth readership surveys of selected publications which will have been conducted. Readership surveys should be conducted annually, and in the light of recent experience, the secretariat should seek to improve the design, methodology and scope of the surveys so that they fulfil their crucial role. In line with that mandate, readership surveys were carried out in respect of major 2011 publications of UNCTAD to (a) analyse readers' evaluation of the main publications in terms of a number of attributes; (b) facilitate continuous improvements in UNCTAD's publications; and (c) draw lessons for the conducting of future readership surveys.

## II. Methodology

### A. Coverage

2. The 2011 readership survey covers the main UNCTAD publications plus a selection of publications covering the work of the different divisions. Specifically, the following publications were included in the survey: (a) *Trade and Development Report* (TDR); (b) *World Investment Report* (WIR); (c) *Least Developed Countries Report* (LDCR); (d) *Economic Development in Africa Report* (EDAR); (e) *Information Economy Report* (IER); (f) *The Road to Rio+20: For a Development-led Green Economy (second issue)*; (g) *Review of Maritime Transport* (RMT). Readers' responses were also requested for two other publications of their own choice. Five publications – the *Trade and Development Report*, *World Investment Report*, *Least Developed Countries Report*, *Economic Development in Africa Report* and *Information Economy Report* – were subject to in-depth reviews in which readers were asked additional questions. Unfortunately, the secretariat received only one or two responses for each in-depth survey, which does not allow for meaningful analysis. Therefore, the results of the in-depth surveys are not presented in this report.

### B. Questionnaire

3. A brief and user-friendly questionnaire was prepared, containing multiple rating responses to a number of attributes on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as the minimum and 5 as the best rating. The attributes were the following: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) analytical quality; (c) enhancement of readers' understanding of issues; (d) assessment of policy conclusions; and (e) presentation. The online survey questionnaire was posted prominently on the home page of UNCTAD website and was also disseminated through the use of divisional mailing lists.

### C. Ratings

4. Numerical data were obtained on the basis of ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 contained in the individual response to the different attributes for each publication (1=minimum rating....5=best rating). An average of ratings was calculated for each attribute, using the following formula:

*Average ratings = sum of all ratings/number of respondents*

5. Average ratings calculated for all attributes pertaining to each publication were rounded off to the nearest decimal point. These results for all attributes were presented in a graph. It should be noted here that the publications in the readership survey were not necessarily comparable in terms of content, and the respondents were not the same for all publications.

#### **D. Respondents**

6. The total number of responses received for this survey was 183, from 60 countries. Of these responses, approximately 21 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 41 per cent with academic and research institutions, 29 per cent from the private sector, 3 per cent from non-governmental organizations, and the rest from international organizations, the media, public enterprises and others.

7. With regard to the respondents affiliated with governments, 43.5 per cent were from developed countries and 56.5 per cent from developing countries.

### **III. Results of the readership survey**

#### **A. Main publications**

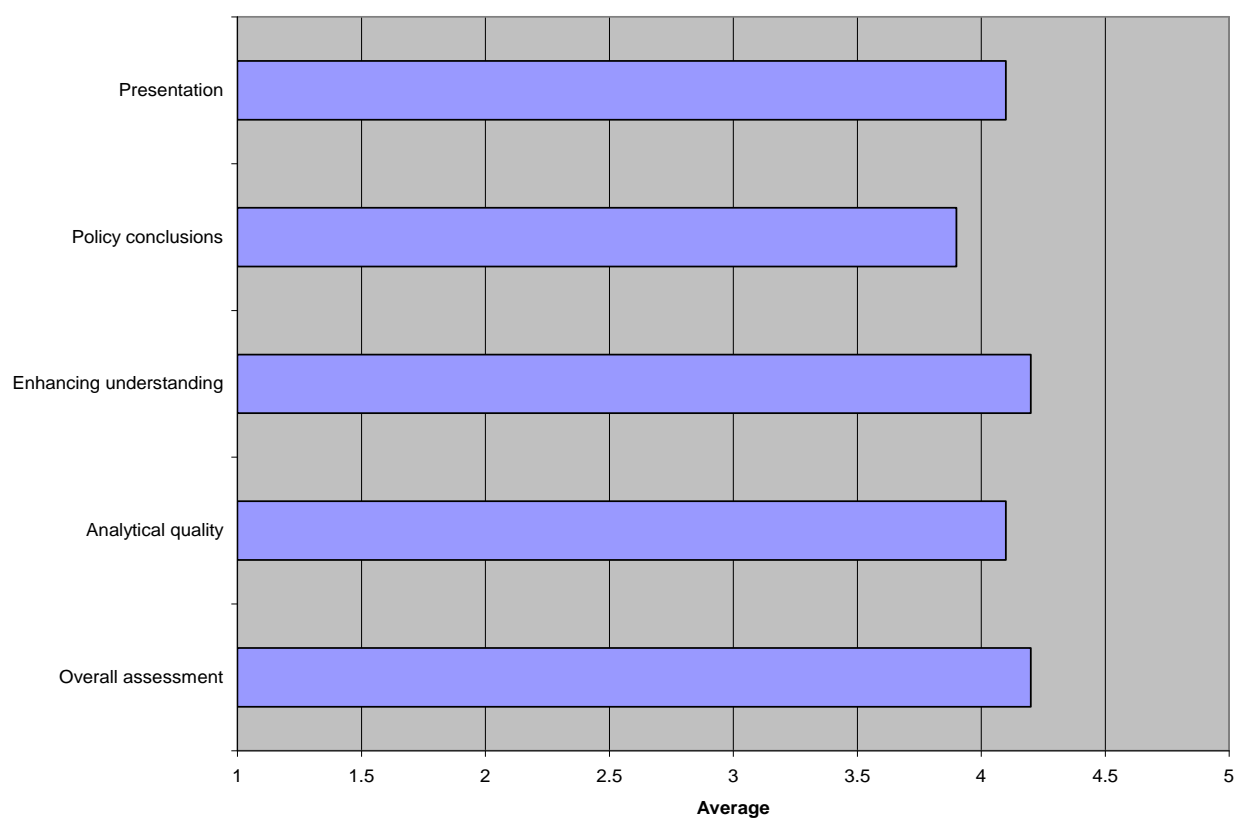
8. The survey of main publications was carried out on the basis of five attributes: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) analytical quality; (c) enhancement of readers' understanding; (d) policy conclusions; and (e) presentation.

9. The results showed that the readers rated the publications very positively. The average for the overall assessment was 4.2, the overall average for analytical quality, enhancement of understanding, and presentation was 4.1 for each attribute, and the overall average for policy conclusions was 4. The average ratings of attributes for individual publications ranged from 3.8 to 4.4. The most frequent individual rating given for most attributes and publications was 4.

## 1. Trade and Development Report 2011: Post-crisis Policy Challenges in the World Economy

10. A total of 110 responses were received for the *Trade and Development Report 2011*. Average ratings are presented in graph 1. Except for the policy conclusions rated at 3.9, all other attributes were rated 4.1 or above.

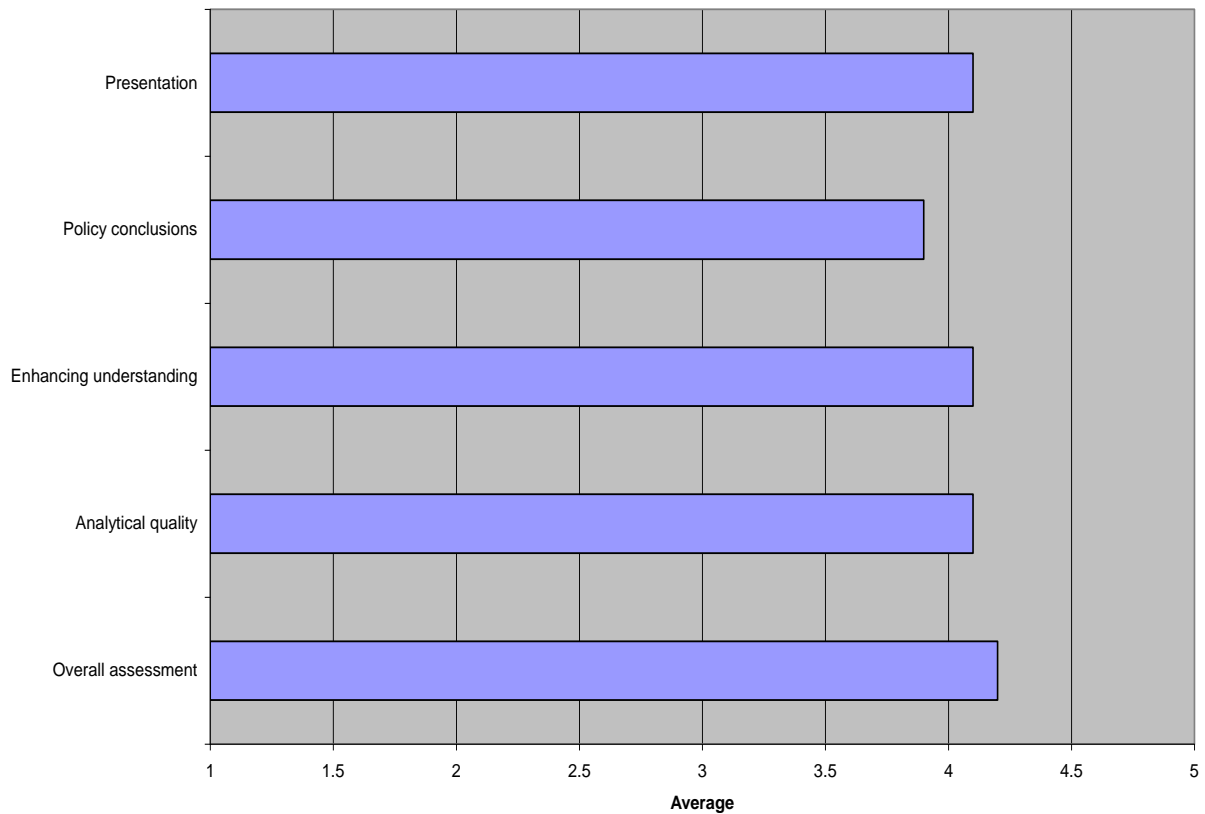
Graph 1  
Survey results for the *Trade and Development Report 2011*



**2. World Investment Report 2011: Non-Equity Modes of International Production and Development**

11. A total of 76 responses were received for *World Investment Report 2011*. The average ratings of attributes are presented in graph 2. The ratings range from 3.9 to 4.2.

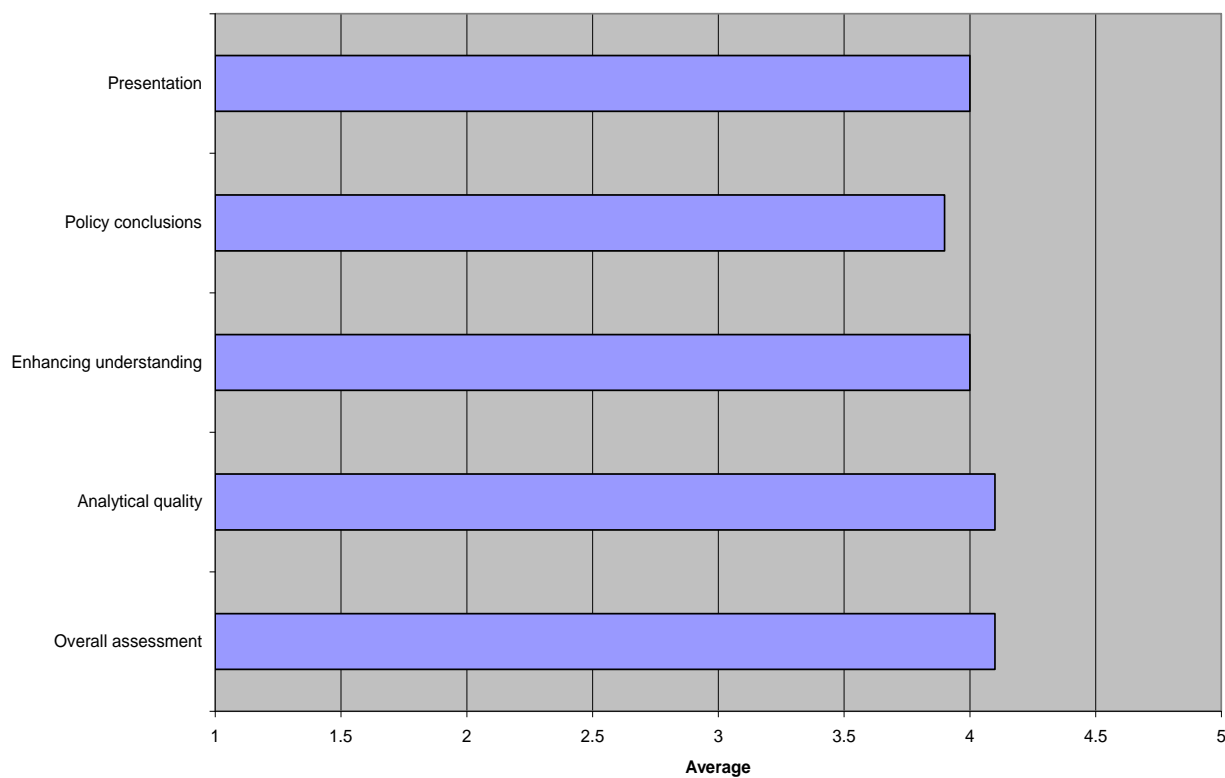
Graph 2  
**Survey results for the *World Investment Report 2011***



### 3. Least Developed Countries Report 2011: The Potential of South–South Cooperation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

12. A total of 61 responses were received from the main publications survey for the *Least Developed Countries Report 2011*. Average ratings in respect of the five attributes are presented in graph 3 below. The ratings are 3.9 and above.

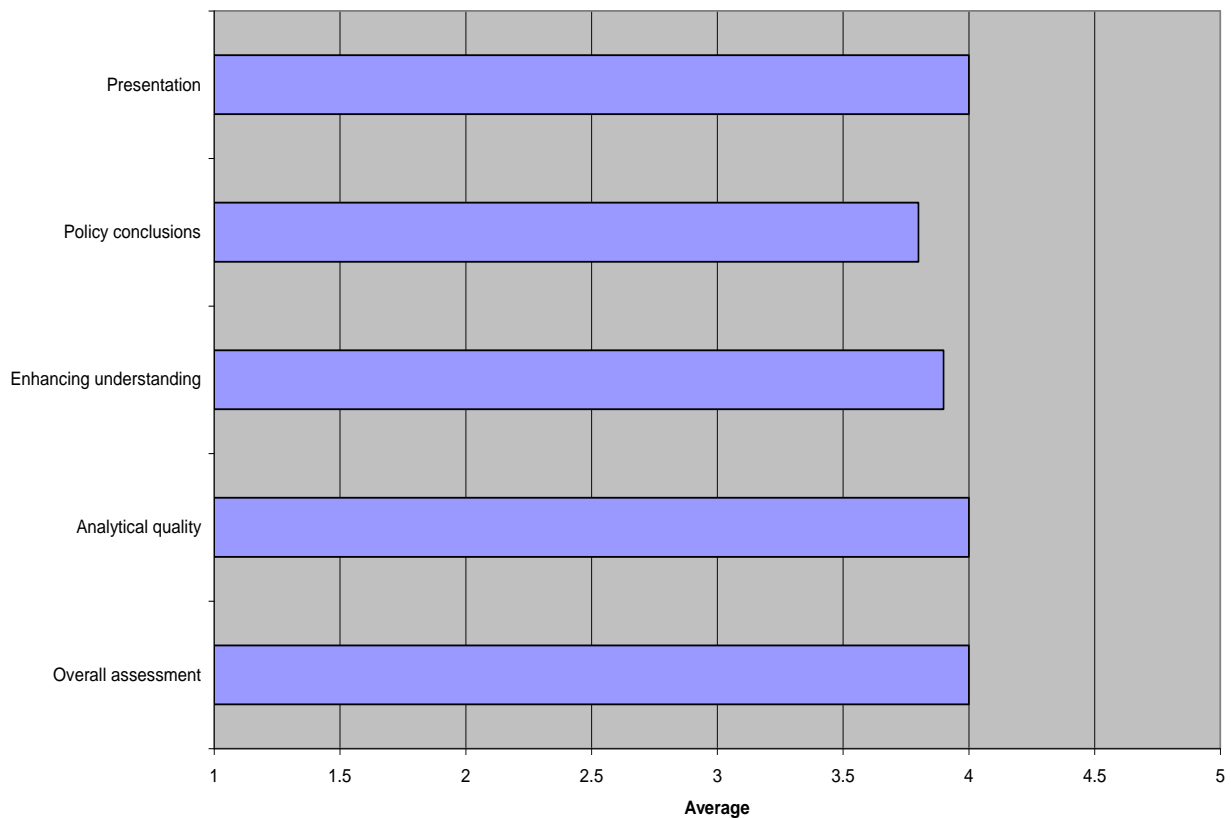
Graph 3  
Survey results for the *Least Developed Countries Report 2011*



**4. Economic Development in Africa Report 2011: Fostering Industrial Development in Africa in the New Global Environment**

13. The total number of responses received from the main publications survey for the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2011* was 46. Average ratings are presented in graph 4. The average ratings are in a range from 3.8 to 4.

Graph 4  
**Survey results for the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2011***

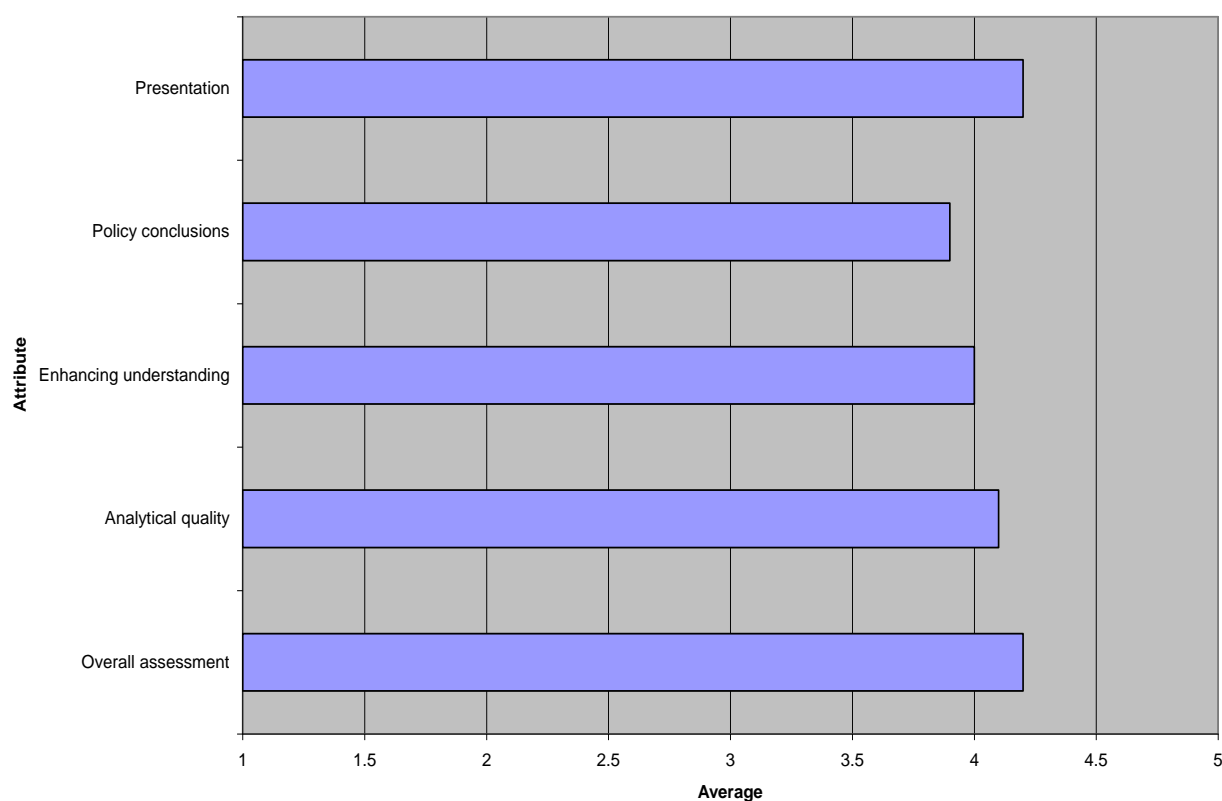




## 5. Information Economy Report 2011: ICTs as an Enabler for Private Sector Development

14. The total number of responses received for the *Information Economy Report 2011* was 55. Average ratings are presented in graph 5. The average ratings for attributes are in a range from 3.9 to 4.2.

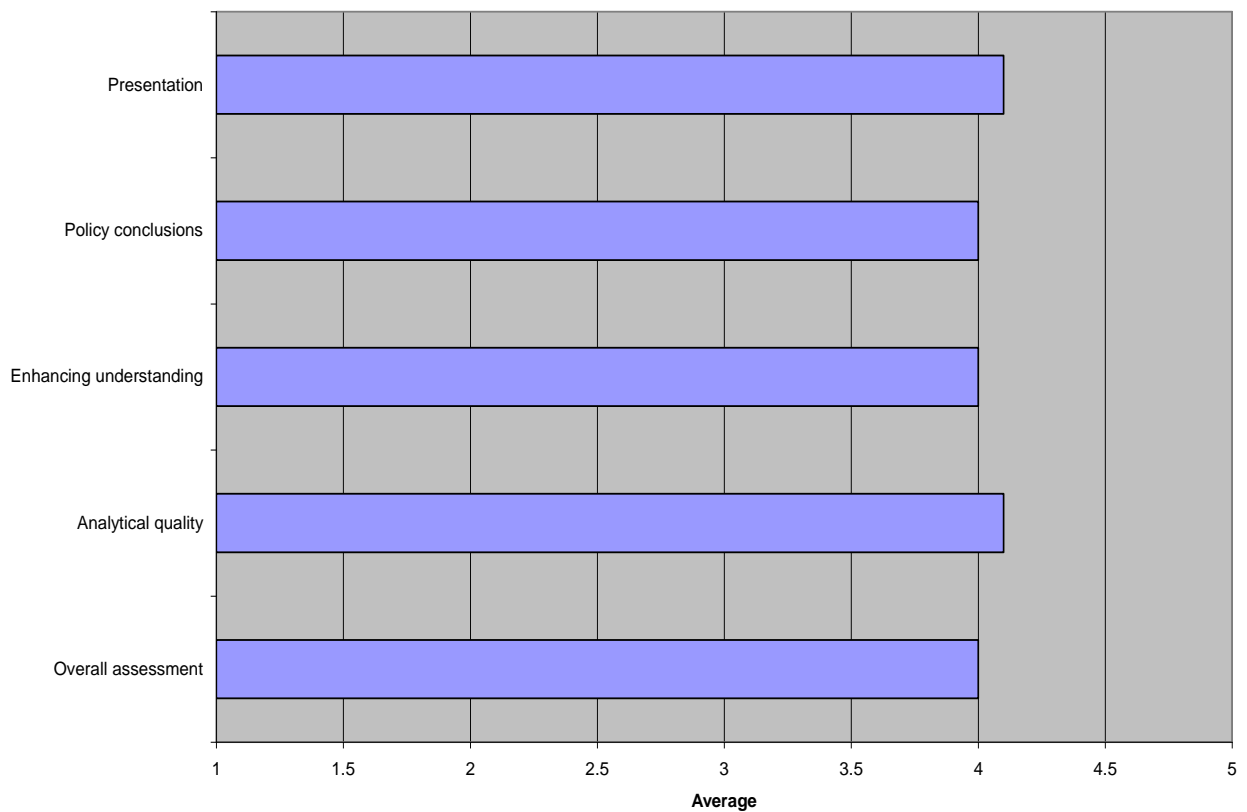
Graph 5  
Survey results for the *Information Economy Report 2011*



**6. The Road to Rio+20: For a Development-led Green Economy (second issue)**

15. A total of 45 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of all five attributes are presented in graph 6 below. They range from 4 to 4.1.

Graph 6  
**Survey results for *The Road to Rio+20: For a Development-led Green Economy (second issue)***

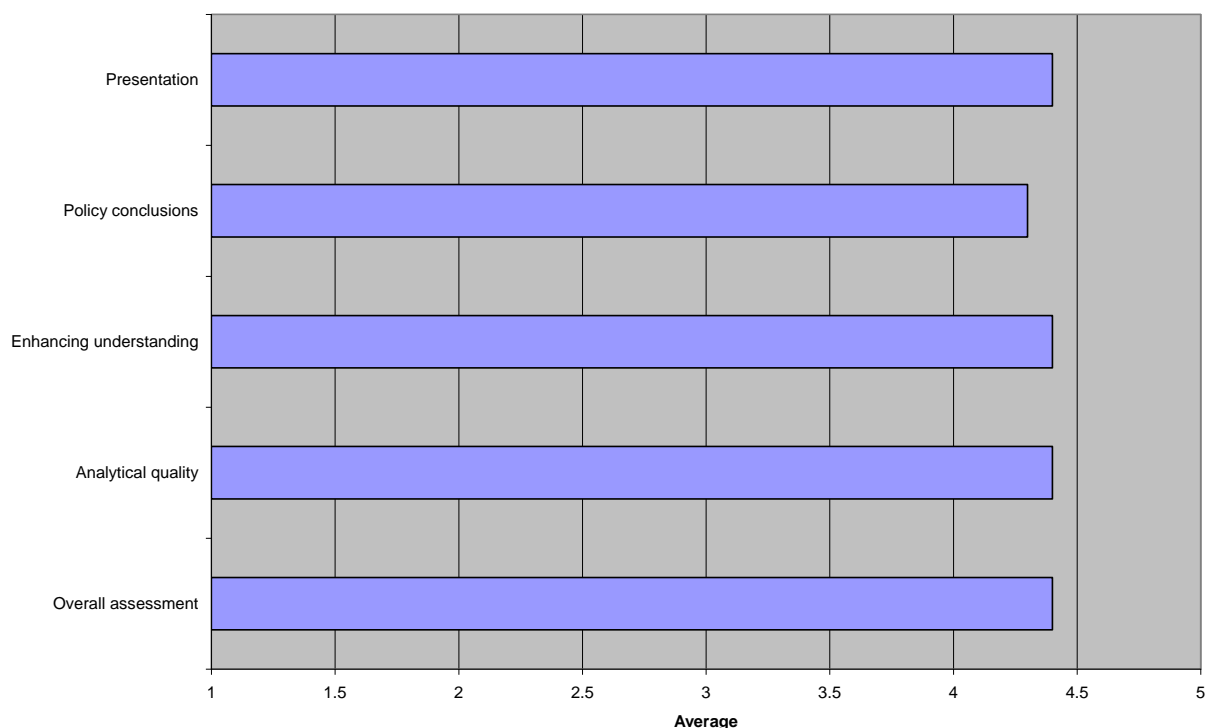


## 7. Review of Maritime Transport 2011

16. A total of 96 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of all five attributes are presented in graph 7 below. Ratings for all attributes are 4.3 and above.

Graph 7

### Survey results for the Review of Maritime Transport 2011



## B. Other publications

17. Several other publications were rated by our respondents under the category “Other publications” (respondent needed to specify). The *Transport Newsletter* was the most frequently mentioned publication and the majority of the ratings were between 4 and 5. Other publications and reports mentioned included: *On the Importance of Market Access for Trade, Technology and Innovation Report 2011*, *ICT Policy Review*, and *study series*. Ratings ranged mostly between 4 and 5.

## IV. Concluding comments

18. The following are some general comments on the results of the survey:

(a) Respondents have evaluated the publications positively. “In offering critical analyses and different perspectives on matters that are of vital importance to developing countries and the global community at large, UNCTAD continues to be a highly important voice in international policy debates.” The overall assessment for all publications is 4.2,

and the most frequent single rating is 4. This trend is similar to those of the previous three surveys;

(b) As shown in the survey, publications have multiple uses, including policy formulation, negotiation, and research and analysis;

(c) The survey received 183 responses, covering a broader range of categories of respondents. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents were from governments. Like last year, there was a higher response especially from academic and research institutions and the private sector. Nevertheless, it would be useful to consider ways of improving the response rate, particularly from governments, which are the primary target group for UNCTAD publications.

## Annex

### Most frequent rating given per attribute and per publication

#### Main publications survey

<i>Report</i>	<i>Overall assessment</i>	<i>Analytical quality</i>	<i>Enhanced understanding</i>	<i>Policy conclusions</i>	<i>Presentation</i>
1 TDR, 2011	4	4	5	4	4
2 WIR, 2011	4	4	4	4	4
3 LDCR, 2011	4	4	4	4	5
4 EDAR, 2011	4	4	4	4	4
5 IER, 2011	4	4	5	4	5
6 The Road to Rio+20	5	5	4	4	4
7 RMT, 2011	5	5	5	5	5