Trade and Development Board
Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget
Sixty-fourth session
Geneva, 4–6 March 2013
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Review of the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD

Report on the readership survey of main publications of UNCTAD in 2012

Executive summary

The UNCTAD 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 fifth systematic survey, eleven publications were selected for the general review and seven for the in-depth review. A brief and user-friendly online questionnaire was disseminated. The total number of responses to the questionnaires was 184 (68 for the general survey and 116 for the in-depth survey), of which approximately 21 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 25 per cent with academic and research institutions, 17 per cent from the private sector, 7 per cent from non-governmental organizations, and the rest from international organizations, the media, public enterprises and others. The results indicate that the readers have rated the publications positively, the average for the overall assessment for the general survey being 4 out of 5 and for the in-depth survey 4.4 out of 5.

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I. Mandate and purpose of the readership survey

1. The UNCTAD 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 that 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 2012 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; (c) draw lessons for conducting future readership surveys.

II. Methodology

A. Coverage

2. The 2012 readership survey covers the main UNCTAD publications plus a selection of publications covering the work of the different divisions. Specifically, the following eleven publications were included in the general survey: (a) *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*; (b) *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Mongolia (Full Report)*; (c) *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: A Tripartite Report on the United Republic of Tanzania–Zambia–Zimbabwe (Full Report)*; (d) *Trade and Development Report 1981–2011: Three Decades of Thinking Development*; (e) *UNCTAD Annual Report 2011*; (f) *The State of Commodity Dependence 2012*; (g) *Commodities at a Glance – Special Issue on Energy*; (h) *Expropriation – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*; (i) *Fair and Equitable Treatment – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*; (j) *Transparency – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*; (k) *Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2012*.

3. Seven publications were subject to in-depth reviews in which readers were asked additional questions: (a) *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*; (b) *World Investment Report 2012 – Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies*; (c) *Least Developed Countries Report 2012 – Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities*; (d) *Economic Development in Africa Report 2012 – Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa*; (e) *Information Economy Report 2012 – The Software Industry and Developing Countries*; (f) *Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration*; (g) *Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011* (as the *Review of Maritime Transport 2012* became available in December 2012).

B. Questionnaire

4. A brief and user-friendly questionnaire was prepared, containing multiple rating responses to a number of attributes on a scale of 1 to 5. The attributes for the general survey were the following: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) analytical quality; (c) enhancement of readers' understanding of issues; (d) assessment of policy conclusions; (e) presentation. For the in-depth survey the attributes were the following: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) the publications' analytical quality; (c) usefulness of

information on emerging and timely issues; (d) understanding of the issues; (e) enhancement of understanding of policy choices; (f) usefulness of the publication; (g) overall presentation.

5.   The online survey questionnaire was launched via the notifications mechanism and sent to member States, accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations. A specific highlight box was also posted prominently on the home page of the UNCTAD website. It was also disseminated through the mailing list of the Virtual Institute. While the survey was conducted for the purpose of this report for four weeks, from 18 January to 12 February 2013, the questionnaire remains available on the UNCTAD website so that author divisions may continue to profit from readers' comments.

C.   Ratings

6.   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

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

D.   Respondents

8.   The total number of responses received for this survey was 184, from 63 countries. Of these responses, approximately 21 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 25 per cent with academic and research institutions, 11 per cent from the private sector, 7 per cent from NGOs, and the rest from international organizations, the media, public enterprises and others (see annex I).

III.   Results of the readership survey

A.   General survey

9.   The general survey covered the following publications:

(a)   *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*;

(b)   *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Mongolia (Full Report)*;

(c)   *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: A Tripartite Report on the United Republic of Tanzania–Zambia–Zimbabwe (Full Report)*;

(d)   *Trade and Development Report 1981–2011: Three Decades of Thinking Development*;

(e)   *UNCTAD Annual Report 2011*;

(f) *The State of Commodity Dependence 2012*;

(g) *Commodities at a Glance – Special Issue on Energy;*

(h) *Expropriation – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II;*

(i) *Fair and Equitable Treatment – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II;*

(j) *Transparency – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II;*

(k) *Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2012.*

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

1. *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*

11.   A total of 48 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings are presented in graph 1. The ratings range was from 3.9 to 4.1.
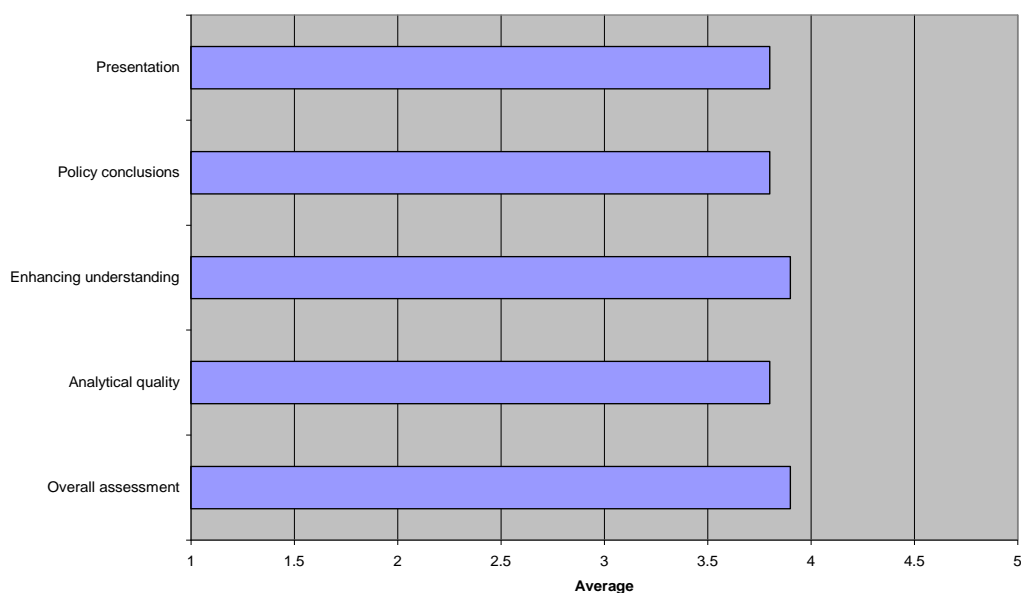
Graph 1
General survey results for the *Trade and Development Report 2012*
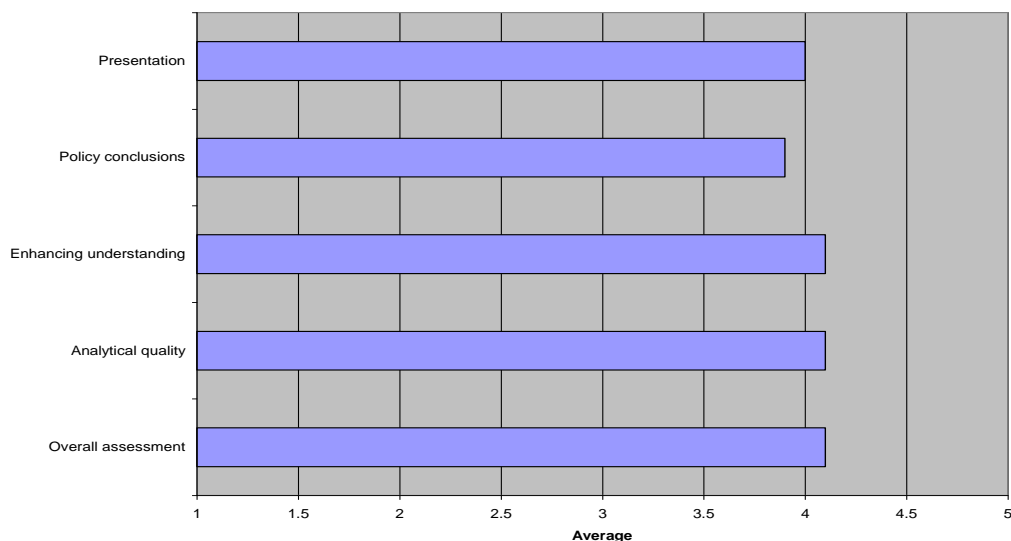
2. *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Mongolia (Full Report)*

12.   A total of 24 responses were received for this publication. The average ratings of attributes are presented in graph 2. The ratings range was from 3.8 to 3.9.

Graph 2
General survey results for the *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Mongolia (Full Report)*

3. *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: A Tripartite Report on the United Republic of Tanzania–Zambia–Zimbabwe (Full Report)*

13.   A total of 19 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of the five attributes are presented in graph 3 below. The ratings range was from 3.5 to 3.7.

Graph 3
General survey results for the *Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: A Tripartite Report on the United Republic of Tanzania-Zambia-Zimbabwe (Full Report)*
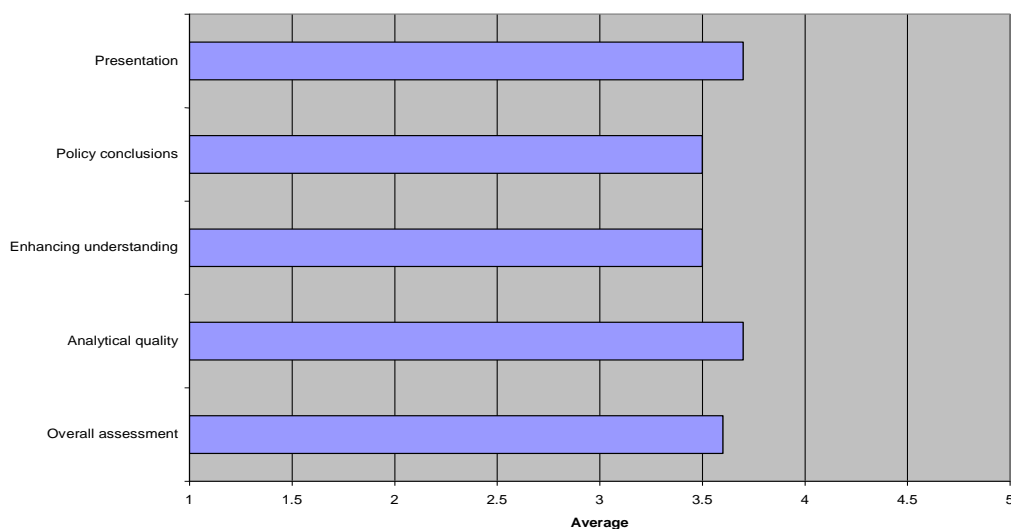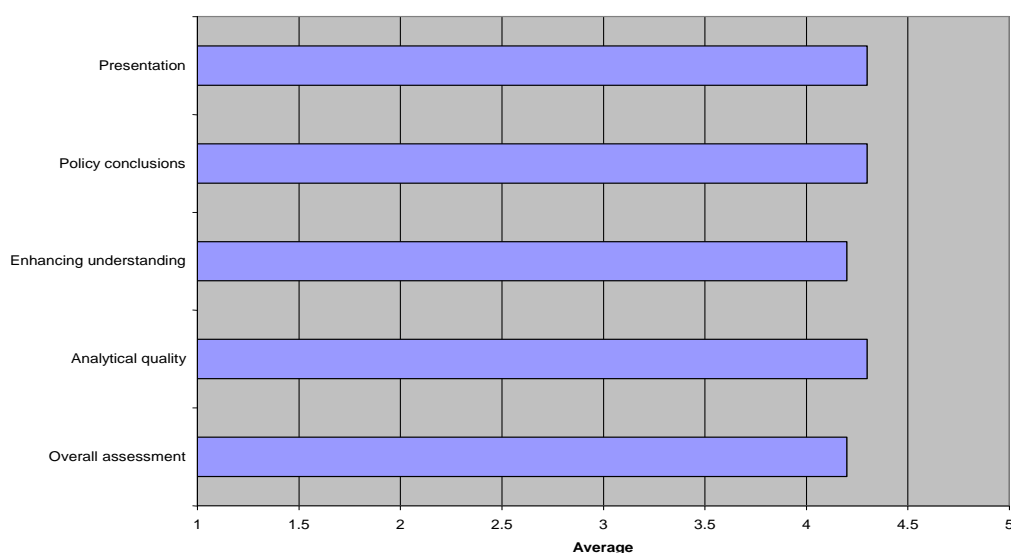

4. *Trade and Development Report 1981–2011: Three Decades of Thinking Development*

14.   The total number of responses received for this report was 28. Average ratings are presented in graph 4. The ratings range was from 4.2 to 4.3.

Graph 4
General survey results for the *Trade and Development Report 1981–2011: Three Decades of Thinking Development*
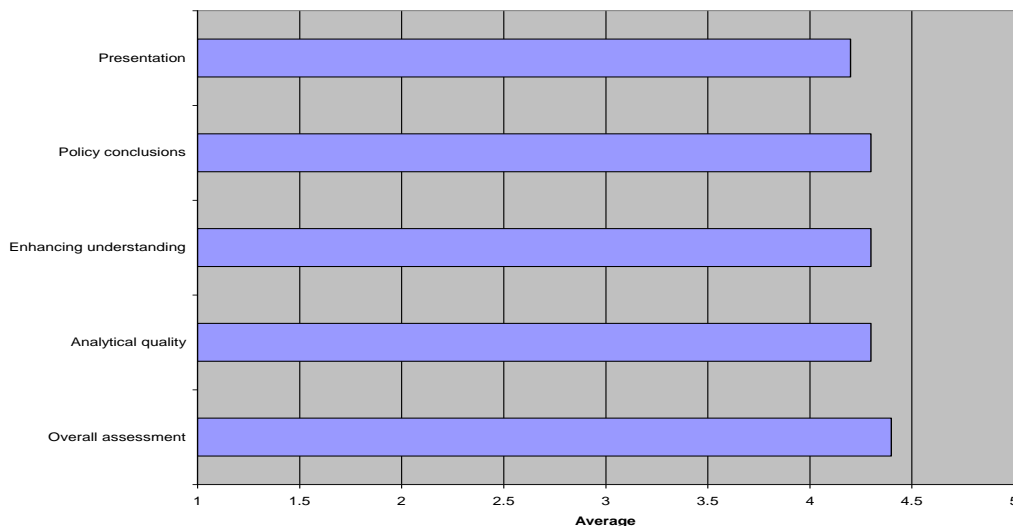
5. *UNCTAD Annual Report 2011*

15. The total number of responses received for this publication was 29. Average ratings are presented in graph 5. The ratings range was from 4.2 to 4.4.

Graph 5
General survey results for the *UNCTAD Annual Report 2011*
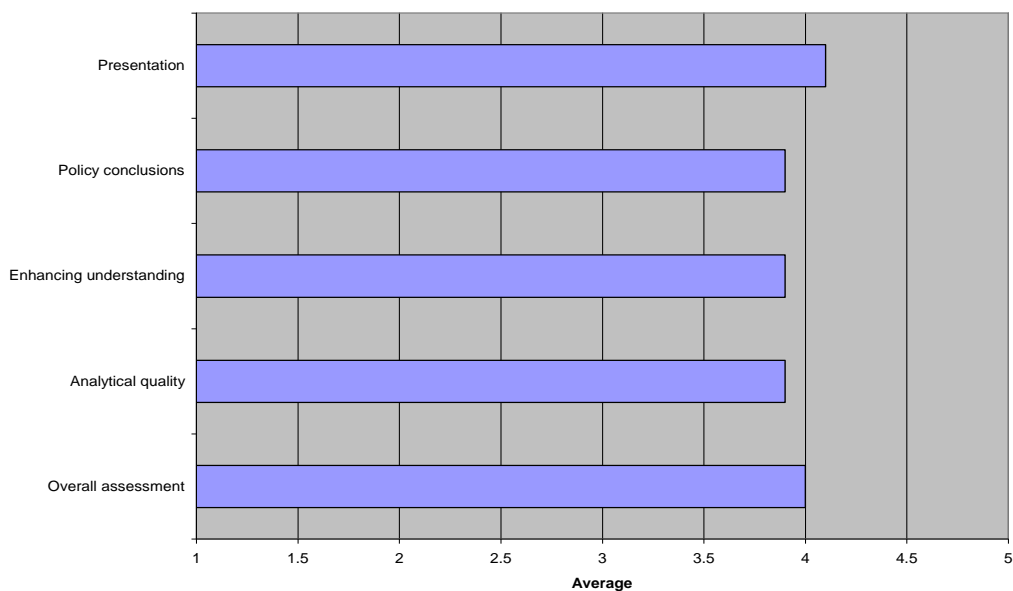

6. *The State of Commodity Dependence 2012*

16. A total of 20 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings are presented in graph 6 below. The ratings range was from 3.9 to 4.1.

Graph 6
**General survey results for *The State of Commodity Dependence 2012***

7. *Commodities at a Glance – Special Issue on Energy*

17.   A total of 20 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of all five attributes are presented in graph 7 below. The ratings range was from 4.1 to 4.2.

Graph 7
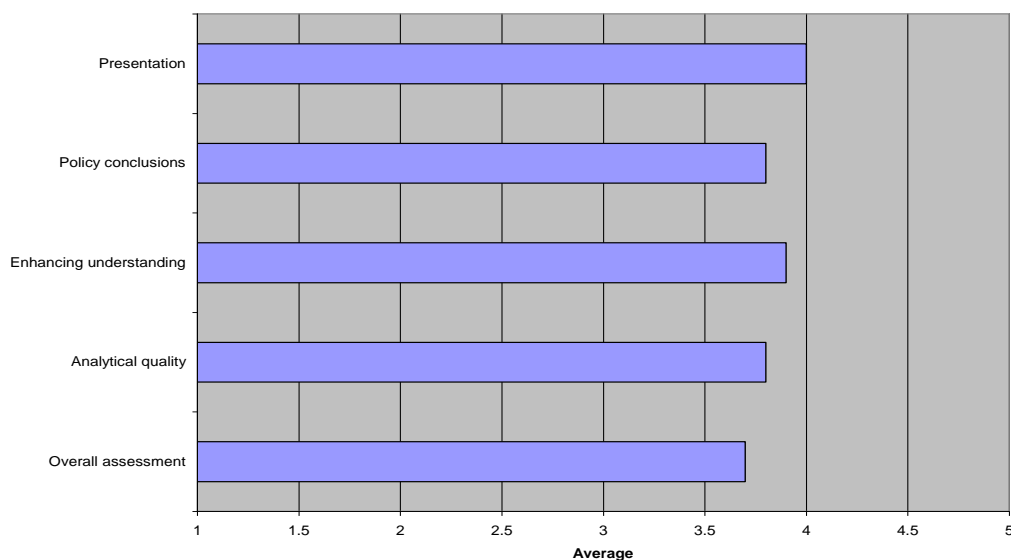**General survey results for the *Commodities at a Glance – Special Issue on Energy***
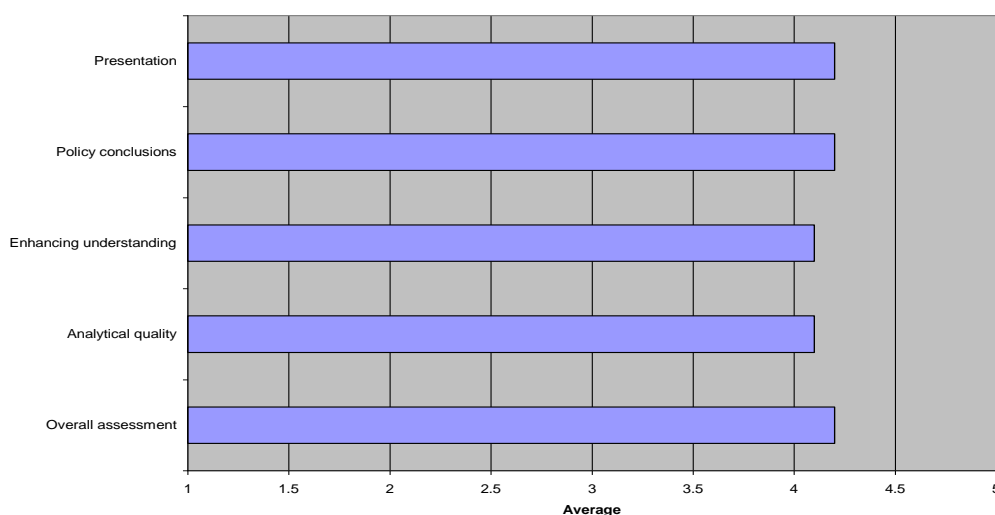
8. *Expropriation – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*

18.   A total of 17 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of all five attributes are presented in graph 8 below. The ratings range was from 3.7 to 4.

Graph 8
General survey results for *Expropriation – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*
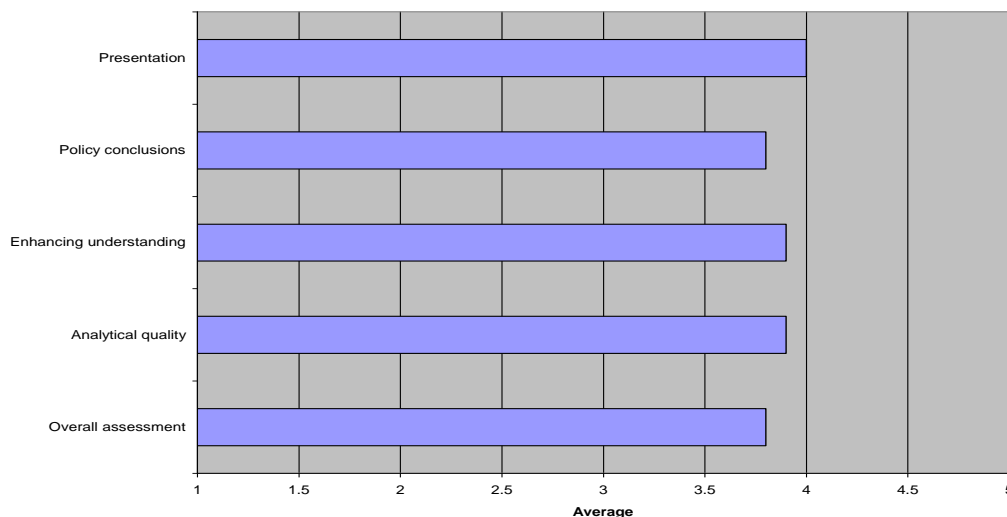
9. *Fair and Equitable Treatment – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*

19.   A total of 17 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings are presented in graph 9 below. The ratings range was from 3.8 to 4.

Graph 9
General survey results for *Fair and Equitable Treatment – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*

**10.**   *Transparency – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*

20.   A total of 18 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings in respect of all five attributes are presented in graph 10 below. The ratings range was from 3.8 to 4.1.

Graph 10
General survey results for *Transparency – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*
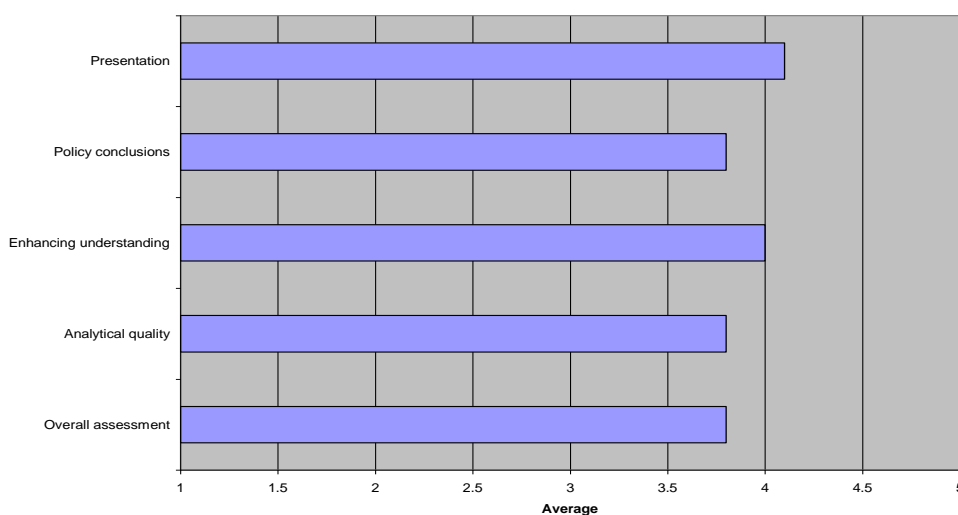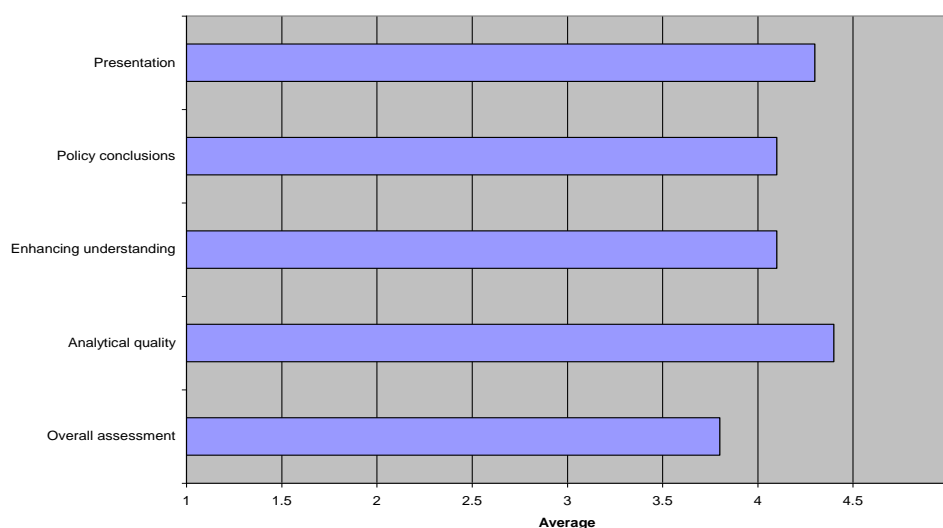
11. *Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2012*

21.   A total of 25 responses were received for this publication. Average ratings are presented in graph 11. The ratings range was from 3.8 to 4.4.

Graph 11
General survey results for *Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2012*

B.   In-depth readership survey

22.   The in-depth survey covered the following publications:

(a)   *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth;*

(b)   *World Investment Report 2012 – Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies;*

(c)   *Least Developed Countries Report 2012 – Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities;*

(d)   *Economic Development in Africa Report 2012 – Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa;*

(e)   *Information Economy Report 2012 – The Software Industry and Developing Countries;*

(f)   *Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration;*

(g)   *Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011.*

23.   The in-depth surveys were carried out on the basis of questions on seven attributes: (a) overall assessment of the publication; (b) the publications' analytical quality; (c) usefulness of information on emerging and timely issues; (d) understanding of the issues; (e) enhancement of understanding of policy choices; (f) usefulness of the publication; (g) overall presentation.

1. *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*
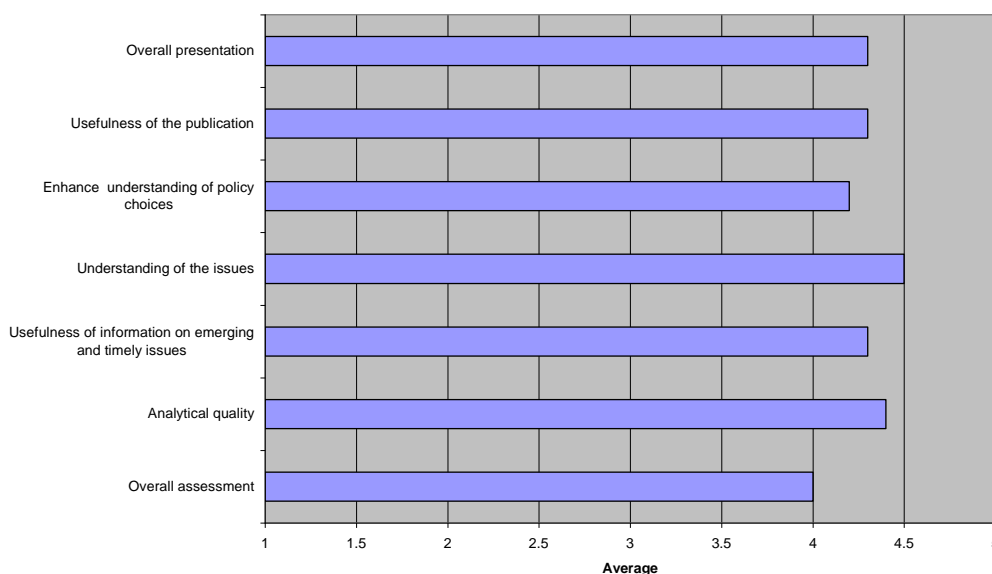
(a) Respondents

24. A total of 8 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 14 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 42 per cent from academic and research institutions and public and private enterprise and the rest were from international organizations, media, NGOs and others.

(b) Average ratings

25. Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 12. The ratings range was from 4 to 4.5.

Graph 12

In-depth survey results for the *Trade and Development Report 2012 – Policies for Inclusive and Balanced Growth*

(c) Qualitative responses

26. **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the publication is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total respondents, 17 per cent used it for analysis and research and 83 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the report for education and training.

27. **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 60 per cent consulted the report three or more times during the past year for their related work. Most respondents had web versions of the report and some had hard copies. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, most wished to receive it via a weblink.

2. *World Investment Report 2012 – Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies*
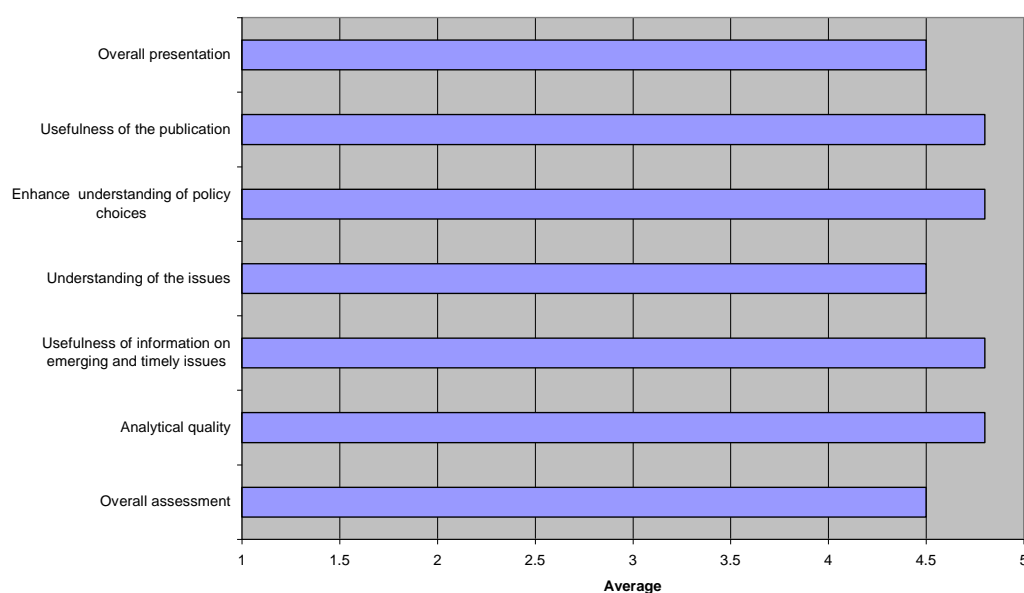
(a) *Respondents*

28. A total of 7 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 29 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 43 per cent were from academic and research institutions and the rest were from international organizations, NGOs, private and public enterprises and others.

(b) *Average ratings*

29. Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 13. The ratings range was from 4.5 to 4.8.

Graph 13

In-depth survey results for the *World Investment Report 2012 – Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies*

(c) *Qualitative responses*

30. **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the *World Investment Report 2012 – Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies* is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total respondents, 71 per cent used the report for analysis and research and 29 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the publication for education and training.

31. **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 67 per cent had consulted the report once or twice during the past year for their related work. Most respondents had a web version of the report and some had hard copies. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, all wished to receive it via a weblink.

3. *Least Developed Countries Report 2012 – Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities*
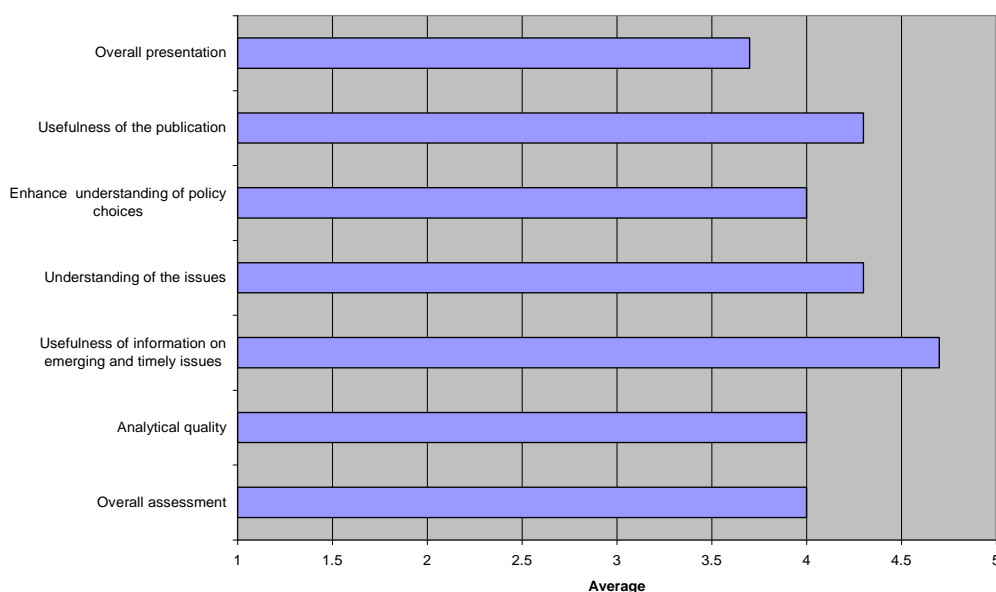
(a) Respondents

32.   A total of 4 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 67 per cent were from respondents from academic and research institutions and the rest responded as others.

(b) Average ratings

33.   Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 14. The ratings range was from 3.7 to 4.7.

Graph 14

In-depth survey results for the *Least Developed Countries Report 2012 – Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities*

(c) Qualitative responses

34.   **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the report is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total respondents, 33 per cent used the report for analysis and research and 67 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the report for education and training.

35.   **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that all respondents had consulted the report three or more times during the past year for their related work. All respondents had hard copies of the report. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, all wished to receive it via a weblink.

4. *Economic Development in Africa Report 2012 – Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa*
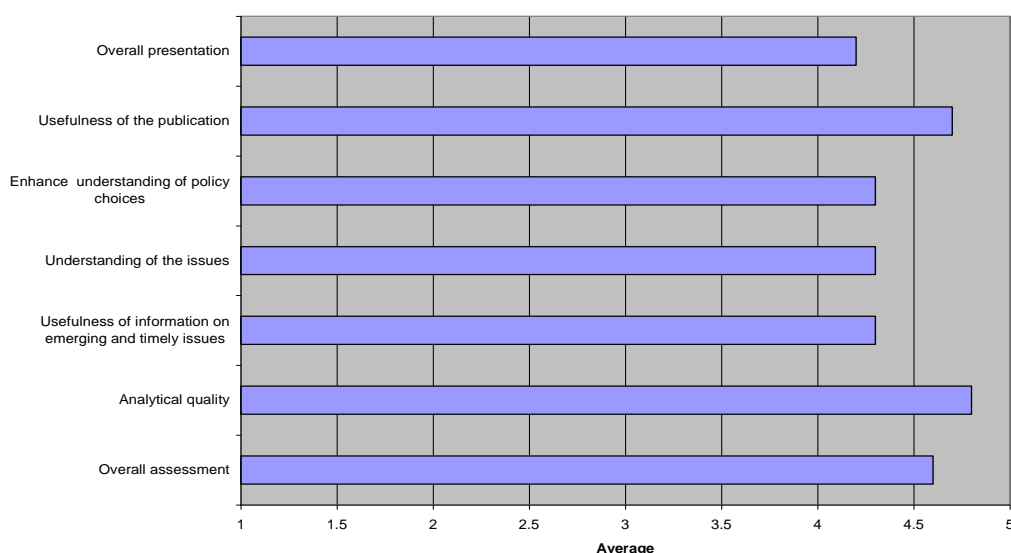
(a) *Respondents*

36.   A total of 9 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 44 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments and the rest were from academic and research institutions, international organizations, NGOs, private and public enterprises and others.

(b) *Average ratings*

37.   Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 15. The ratings range was from 4.2 to 4.8.

Graph 15
In-depth survey results for the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2012 – Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa*

(c) *Qualitative responses*

38.   **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the report is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total respondents, 50 per cent used the report for analysis and research, 25 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the report for policy formulation, and 25 per cent for education and training.

39.   **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 25 per cent had consulted the report three or more times, 50 per cent once or twice and 25 never during the past year for their related work. Most respondents had a web version and some had hard copies of the report. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, 75 per cent wished to receive it via a weblink and 25 per cent wished to receive a hard copy.

5. *Information Economy Report 2012 – The Software Industry and Developing Countries*
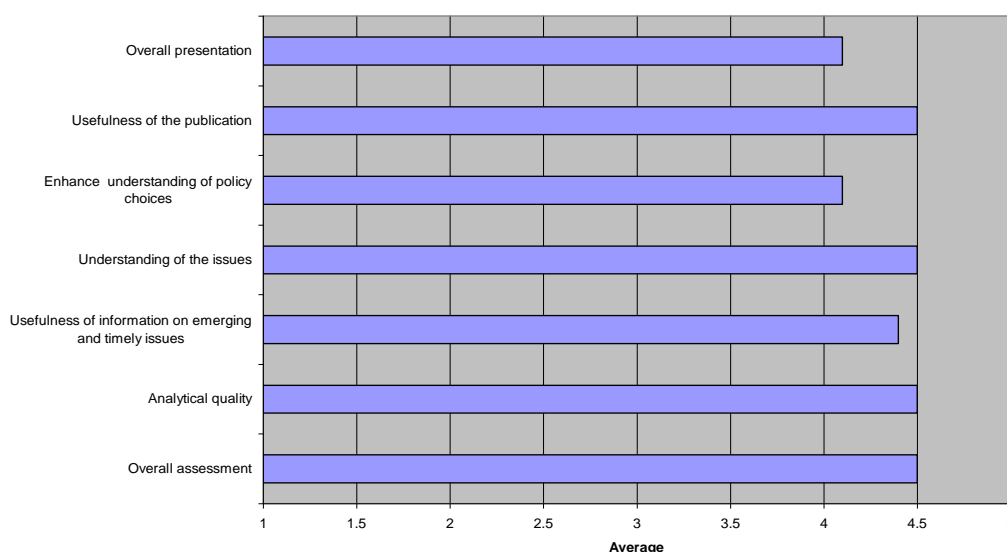
(a) *Respondents*

40.   A total of 17 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 12 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 29 per cent were from academic and research institutions and the rest were from international organizations, NGOs, private and public enterprises and others.

(b) *Average ratings*

41.   Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 16. The ratings range was from 4.1 to 4.5.

Graph 16

In-depth survey results for the *Information Economy Report 2012 – The Software Industry and Developing Countries*

(c) *Qualitative responses*

42.   **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the publication is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total respondents, 59 per cent used the report for analysis and research, 23 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained for policy formulation, and 17 per cent for education and training.

43.   **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 85 per cent had consulted the report three or more times during the past year for their related work. Most respondents had hard copies of the report, some consulted web versions. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, most wished to receive hard copies.

6. *Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration*
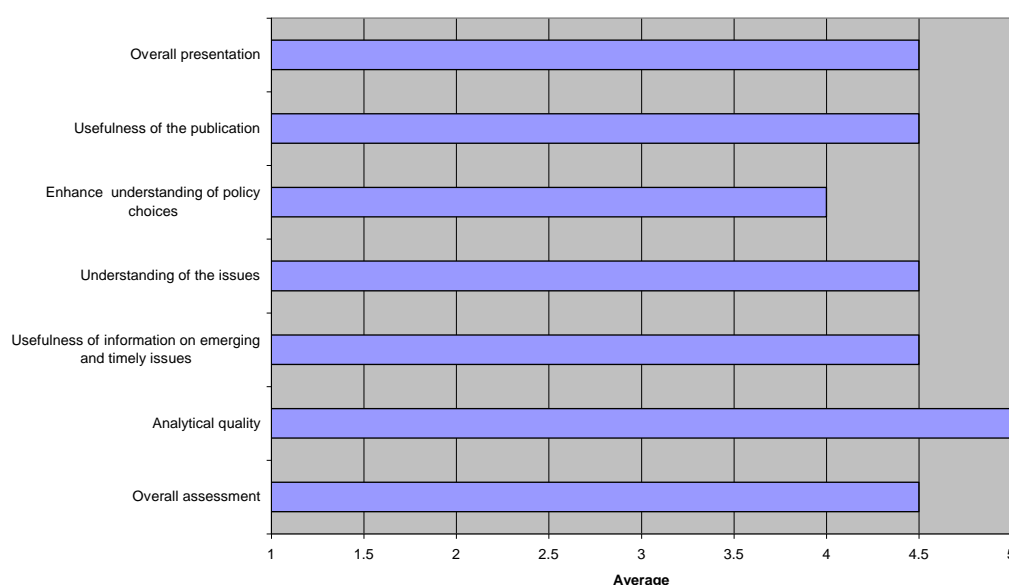
(a) *Respondents*

44.   A total of 4 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for the *Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration*. Out of these, 33 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 33 per cent from international organizations and 33 per cent from academic and research institutions.

(b) *Average ratings*

45.   Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 17. The ratings range was from 4 to 5.

Graph 17

In-depth survey results for *Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration*

(c) *Qualitative responses*

46.   **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the publication is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total number of respondents, 67 per cent used the report for analysis and research and 33 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the Report for education and training.

47.   **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 50 per cent had consulted the report three or more times and 50 per cent once or twice during the past year for their related work. Respondents were split equally between those having a hard copy and those using a web version. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, again it was a 50-50 split between those wishing to receive hard copies and those preferring a weblink.

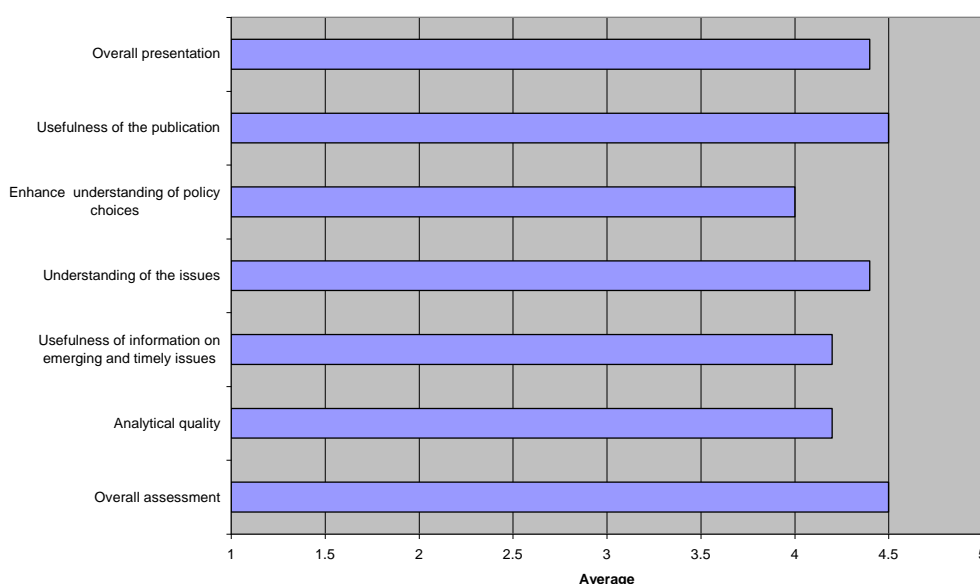**7.** *Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011*

(a)   *Respondents*

48.   A total of 70 responses were received for the in-depth readership survey for this publication. Out of these, 20 per cent were from respondents affiliated with governments, 26 per cent from academic and research institutions and the rest were from international organizations, NGOs, private and public enterprises and others.

(b)   *Average ratings*

49.   Average ratings for each of the seven attributes are presented in graph 18. The ratings range was from 4 to 4.5.

Graph 18
In-depth survey results for the *Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011*

(c)   *Qualitative responses*

50.   **The purposes for which respondents use the report:** The survey indicates that the *Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011* is used simultaneously for multiple purposes by its readers. Out of the total number of respondents, 59 per cent used the report for analysis and research, 11.4 per cent used the knowledge and analyses obtained from the report in negotiations and policy formulation, and 26 per cent for education and training.

51.   **The frequency with which respondents consult the report:** The in-depth survey indicates that 69 per cent had consulted the report three or more times during the past year for their related work. Most respondents had consulted the web version and some had hard copies of the report. In terms of receiving the publication in the future, 47 per cent wished to receive an electronic copy, 27 per cent a hard copy and the rest via a weblink.

IV.   Concluding comments

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

(a)   Respondents have evaluated the publications positively. The average overall assessment for the publications included in the general survey was 4 and those included in the in-depth survey, 4.4. The average rating of attributes to individual publications ranged from 3.5 to 4.4 for the general survey, and from 3.7 to 5 for the in-depth survey. The most frequent rating given per attribute and per publication for the general survey was 4, and for the in-depth survey, 5 (see annex II).

(b)   As shown by the in-depth survey, publications are used for different purposes: analyses and research (prevailing), education and training, and policy formulation.

(c)   The in-depth survey shows that while many readers indicated their interest to receive publications via a weblink, there is a continuing demand for hard copies.

(d)   The survey received in total 184 responses, a similar level to survey of the previous year (183). At the same time, there was an increase in the number of responses to the in-depth survey – 116. Whilst responses were received from various groups of readers (see annex I) – international organizations, NGOs, private and public enterprises – the majority of respondents (25 per cent) associate themselves with academic and research institutions. Approximately 21 per cent of responses came from respondents affiliated with governments – which is at the same level as the last survey – but much lower than the survey of two years ago (34 per cent). This indicates that there is a need to consider ways of improving the response rate, particularly from governments, which are the primary target group for UNCTAD publications.

Annex I

Distribution of responses by category of respondent
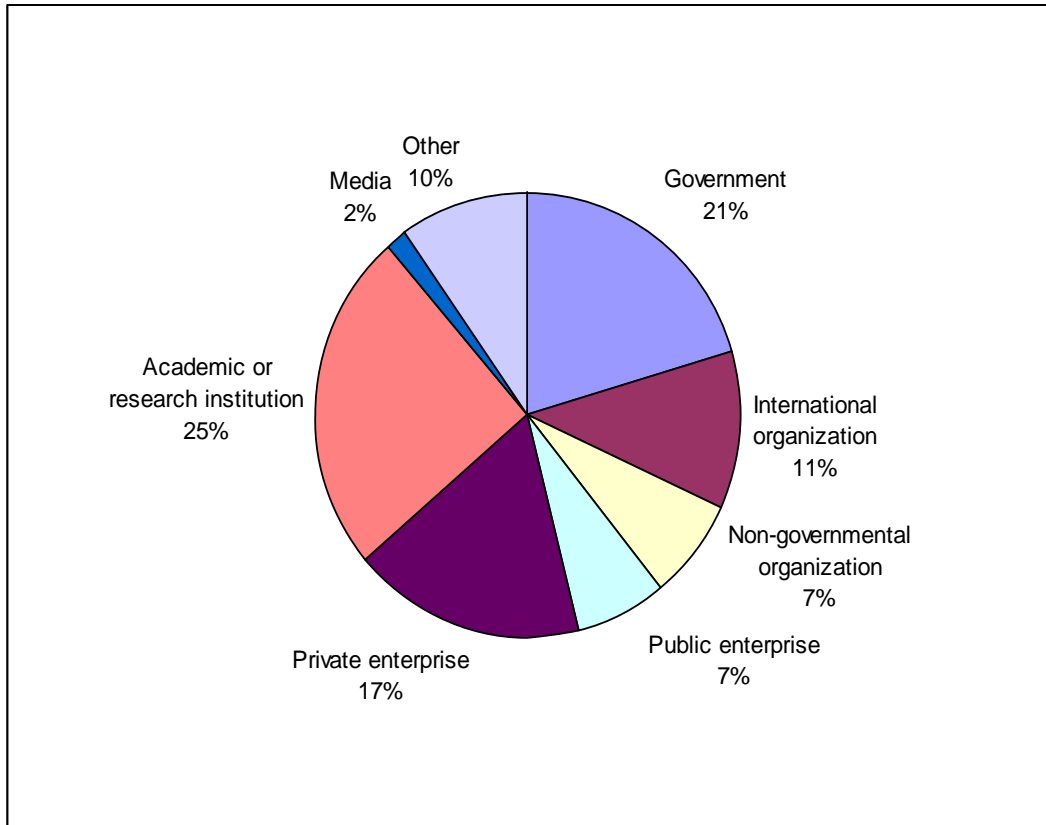
Annex II

Most frequent rating given per attribute and per publication

General survey

	Report	Overall assessment	Analytical quality	Enhancement of readers' understanding of issues	Policy conclusions	Presentation
1	*Trade and Development Report 2012*	4	4	5	4	4
2	*Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Mongolia*	4	4	5	4	4
3	*Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: A Tripartite Report on the United Republic of Tanzania–Zambia–Zimbabwe*	4	5	4	4	4
4	*Trade and Development Report 1981–2011*	4	5	5	5	5
5	*UNCTAD Annual Report 2011*	5	5	5	4	5
6	*The State of Commodity Dependence 2012*	4	5	5	4	4
7	*Commodities at a Glance – Special Issue on Energy*	5	4	4	5	4
8	*Expropriation – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*	5	4	5	4	5
9	*Fair and Equitable Treatment – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*	4	4	5	4	5
10	*Transparency – UNCTAD Series on Issues in International Investment Agreements II*	4	5	5	4	5
11	*Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2012*	5	5	5	4	5

In-depth survey

	Report	Overall assessment	Analytical quality	Usefulness of information on emerging and timely issues	Understanding of the issues	Enhance-ment of understand -ing of policy choices	Useful- ness	Overall presentation
1	*Trade and Development Report 2012*	5	5	5	4/5	4	5	5
2	*World Investment Report 2012*	4/5	5	5	4/5	5	5	4
3	*Least Developed Countries Report 2012 – Harnessing Remittances and Diaspora Knowledge to Build Productive Capacities*	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
4	*Economic Development in Africa Report 2012 – Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa*	5	5	4	5	5	5	4
5	*Information Economy Report 2012 – The Software Industry and Developing Countries*	5	4	5	5	4	4/5	5
6	*Technology and Innovation Report 2012 – Innovation, Technology and South–South Collaboration*	4/5	5	4/5	4/5	5	4/5	4/5
7	*Review of Maritime Transport Report 2011*	5	4	5	5	4	5	5