

SCDI PRESS RELEASE

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NEW HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS LEADERSHIP FOR SCDI

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A leader of one of the Highlands and Islands' major international businesses is to become the new Chair of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) in the region.

Michael Urquhart, Joint Managing Director, Gordon & MacPhail will take over from Joe Moore, Director of Corporate Services and Finance, Scottish Natural Heritage in the New Year when Mr Moore steps down after nearly eight years in the role. Mr Urquhart will Chair SCDI's Highlands and Islands Committee and represent the region on SCDI's national Board.

Earlier this year Jane Cumming, Managing Director, Platform PR, was appointed as SCDI's first Deputy Chair for the Highlands and Islands, and to strengthen further the region's policy input into SCDI, Sandy Cumming CBE will also join SCDI's Highlands and Islands Committee from Spring 2011 and represent it on SCDI's national policy-making Executive Committee.

SCDI has continued to strengthen its operations in the region, having recently appointed David Richardson as SCDI's new Highlands and Islands Manager, and Melanie Riddell as Regional Co-ordinator for Young Engineers & Science Clubs in Scotland.

Michael Urquhart said:

"I am honoured to become SCDI's Highlands and Islands Chair and determined to work with the wide range of business, public and third sector leaders in SCDI's unique partnership to build on this region's progress with our ambition to become one of Europe's most successful.

"I believe that the Highlands and Islands and SCDI draw great strengths from each other. We are a region of unique opportunities to contribute to Scotland's sustainable economic growth.

"Our vision is of a globally-ambitious, innovative region, with first-class transport, energy and digital connections, which maximises its matchless natural and created assets, and its greatest resource – its people. We need to influence and inspire Government at all levels, home-grown and inward investor businesses and our young people, fresh talent and visitors, to achieve it.

"There is a need to rebalance the economy and we also need to ensure that all communities in the region, including the islands and remote parts, and areas such as Moray currently threatened by significant job losses, have the opportunity to adapt and share in this success.

"SCDI's Highlands and Islands Committee brings together people and organisations committed to the business, economic and community development priorities for the

region. With Jane Cumming as Deputy Chair and Sandy Cumming joining us, we will work with our new Manager David Richardson to ensure that this region's voice is clearly heard nationally.

"On behalf of the Committee and SCDI, I would to express great thanks to Joe for his leadership over the past 8 years. We look forward to his continued contribution to our work."

Joe Moore will continue to represent Scottish Natural Heritage on SCDI's Highlands and Islands Committee and SCDI on some external bodies, including UHI Millennium Institute.

He said:

"It has been a real pleasure to act as Chair for approaching eight years. In that time, we have reinforced SCDI's unique position as the representative organisation on sustainable economic development for the private, public and third sectors for the whole of the Highlands and Islands. I believe we can point to a significant role in the region's growing economic success.

"However, it is clear that - with the public sector budget consolidation - fresh challenges now face the region, and I believe that the time is right for me to pass the baton on to a new Chair.

"Michael and his family have developed a fantastically successful business, the World's Leading Malt Whisky Specialist, which was recently recognised at SCDI's international business awards. Gordon & MacPhail is precisely the kind of business which this region and Scotland needs to support and replicate if they are to be successful in the global economy.

"I am sure that Michael's leadership and our strengthened team will be highly-valued by members in the region and SCDI's Board, as we drive forward our shared ambition to enable the Highlands and Islands to be a powerhouse for Scotland's sustainable economic growth."

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For further information please call David Richardson on 07563 725 056

Notes to Editors

SCDI is an independent membership network which strengthens Scotland's competitiveness by influencing Government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity, with offices in Inverness, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. Our membership is drawn from Scottish business, trade unions, public agencies, educational institutions, local authorities, voluntary sector and inter faith groups.