I would like to reinforce the following points:

1. The comparison of Scotland's international unitised/container freight port traffic levels with that of the much smaller nation of Iceland, and also with comparable sized countries, confirms that Scotland's international trade is grossly under-developed;

2. The unconventional ownership and regulatory approach to ports in the UK which in my opinion prevents capital investment in new port infrastructure and acts to constrains trade, as evidenced by the very limited volume of international unitised port traffic moving via Scotland's ports;

3. The leakage of the balance of Scotland's international trade via remote seaports in the south of England, which adds expensive land transport costs and also further constrains Scotland's trading potential;

4. The critical relationship between international trade facilitation and economic growth, both of which depend on a nation having direct access to advanced low-cost ports and international shipping connections, and which implies that without government action on this matter, economic growth will be difficult to achieve;

5. The solution I advocate is for Scotland's Government to actively seek to develop advanced port capacity and shipping connections serving international markets, and that a Scottish Maritime Policy in this respect is essential.

13 March 2015