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The N-56 initiative and the Scotland Means Business reports offer a new approach to the challenges and opportunities that this country face in the years ahead.

My role as a CEO and chairman of emerging technology companies, working in the UK, the US, the Middle East and Australia over the past 20 years, has taught me that business success must be based on a willingness to learn and adapt to best practice from around the world.

The lessons are clear if we look for them. In the international medical technology sector in which my own business currently operates, it is the small countries which manage to leverage the growth of their research and technology bases to generate employment and contribute to economic growth that ultimately catch up with - and overtake - the performance of their rivals.

That innovation-based approach is one followed by small economies as diverse as those of Singapore and Ireland, and it is just one of the themes examined in detail by the Scotland Means Business reports.

These reports, authored by leading UK and international economists, provide a powerful independent analysis of Scotland's current economic performance and explore what business leaders, policymakers and wider society could do going forward.

Crucially, they look beyond the usual comparisons that are often made about Scotland's performance relative to the rest of the UK. Scotland needs to innovate and the best way to do that is to look outwards at the most relevant examples of successes from elsewhere in the world, and ask ourselves what we are doing that's different and what we can do in future that could help us perform better.

The answers are not simple. Like any strong business proposition, Scotland has enormous potential to do better, but we must openly and honestly address core challenges, including the need to improve social outcomes and reduce inequality.

Yet the opportunities that do exist, and which are detailed in the Scotland Means Business reports are tremendously exciting. We have existing and potential competitive advantages in a range of global growth export-based sectors, from energy services, to life sciences; food and drink to insurance and financial services.

The key to success however, is to harness a new ethos of collaboration, between business leaders, policymakers and the rest of society, to ensure that the economic and social potential of Scotland is unlocked to the full.

This marks a clear opportunity for business leaders across Scotland to get involved. I would therefore urge others to join in, first by reading and understanding the Scotland Means Business reports; and then to consider getting more involved in the new N-56 initiative to build on their findings and drive forward their objectives.