



## David Stewart Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

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### Highland Labour MSP accuses Scottish Government of snub to Scotland Office over Highland Convention

David Stewart, Highlands and Islands Labour MSP is writing to the First Minister to ask why the UK government has not been invited to a high profile region-wide development conference.

The Highlands and Islands Convention is due to take place on Monday in Shetland and Mr Stewart is concerned that SNP political manoeuvring has led to the snub to Scotland Office Ministers, who regularly attend meetings of the convention, representing the UK Government.

"This group has traditionally worked together in a non-partisan way for the best interests of the Highlands and Islands.

"Scotland Office Ministers have always been invited by the previous First Ministers and it is in the interests of us all to keep that door open – particularly when discussing issues reserved for Westminster.

"The Convention itself was set up in 1996 by the then Secretary of State for Scotland," said Mr Stewart.

"I believe it is important that we get the best deal for the Highlands and Islands and that can't be done if the First Minister is shutting key UK government Ministers out of discussions.

"I would hope that narrow and petty political point scoring would not get in the way when working for the future of our communities," he said.

"I will be raising this with Mr Salmond and urging him to remedy this oversight from his office and to return to the normal procedure of inviting our Scotland Office Ministers to attend. "

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David Stewart's website : [www.davidstewart.org.uk](http://www.davidstewart.org.uk)