

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS490)

Deputy Prime Minister

Written Statement made by: **Deputy Prime Minister (Mr Nick Clegg)** on 26 Mar 2015.

Commencement of Succession to the Crown Act 2013

Today the provisions of the Succession to the Crown Act 2013 come into force.

The Act removes the male bias in the line of succession, ending the system of male heirs automatically inheriting the throne over female heirs and removing this historic discrimination against women. The Act also ends another long-standing piece of discrimination, the bar on anyone who marries a Roman Catholic from becoming monarch, and replaces the outdated Royal Marriages Act 1772 such that only the first 6 in line to the throne need consent of the monarch to marry.

These changes were agreed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Perth, Australia, in October 2011. The Government has worked closely with the 15 other countries where the Queen is Head of State to make the necessary arrangements to give effect to the changes. Today these changes have come into effect across every Realm.

During the passage of the legislation the Advocate General undertook to update Parliament as to how each Realm had given effect to the changes to Royal succession. Six Realms in addition to the United Kingdom chose to legislate for the changes: Australia, Barbados, Canada, New Zealand, St Kitts and Nevis and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Nine Realms concluded that the legislation was not necessary: Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

The Act reflects this Government's emphasis on equality by removing centuries of discrimination on both religious and gender grounds. The Act puts in place succession laws that are fit for the 21st century and for a modern constitutional monarchy.