Surrogacy law progresses

Taing Vida / Khmer Times

Interior Minister Sar Kheng is monitoring the progress of a draft law aimed at addressing the problem of surrogacy in the Kingdom, which is now being debated at the inter-ministerial level.

Mr Kheng on Tuesday evening briefed Donica Pottie, Canada's Ambassador to the Kingdom, on the draft laws progress, ministry spokesman Phat Sophanith said on Tuesday.

"Currently, Cambodia is working on the draft surrogacy law and I will look into it closely, although now the bill is yet to be adopted," Mr Kheng said during the

meeting. "We will try to solve the problem since the surrogate business is now a very complex issue with regards to human rights and other issues."

Chou Bun Eng, chairwoman of the National Authority against Human Trafficking, who also attended the meeting, on Tuesday said that relevant officials are at odds over the law due to humanitarian reasons.

She said some requested surrogacy to be legalised for moral and humanitarian reasons, while others suggested it should come under the law on adoption.

"The first draft of this law considered legalizing it for humanitarian reasons…but I am not sure if the working group later changed it," Ms Bun Eng said. "The key question is that should a childless couple request for a baby though surrogacy, should we allow them to do so on humanitarian grounds."

According to Ms Bun Eng, the law is taking a long time to formulate because the government is studying laws from other countries to avoid potential problems in the future.

Minister of Women's Affairs spokeswoman Phun Puthborey yesterday said that the working group has planned a second inter-ministerial meeting in December to finalise the law.

"The bill is still under discussion because the group wants to study recent cases of surrogate businesses," Mr Puthborey said. "I cannot tell you in detail about the latest draft but I agree that in the first draft we suggested that surrogacy could be made legal for humanitarian reasons."