

Japan legislators may accept surrogate birth technologies



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JAPAN - The outline of a bill compiled by a Liberal Democratic Party project team allows some assisted reproduction technologies, such as surrogate births, that the Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology prohibits, it has been learned. The outline also allows the donation of sperm, ova and fertilized eggs by third parties, according to sources.

The LDP will continue discussing the outline with its junior coalition partner New Komeito. The LDP plans to submit a bill developed from the outline as lawmaker-sponsored legislation, the sources said.

The conception of children using sperm and eggs provided by third-party donors, as well as surrogate pregnancies, in which the fertilized egg of a couple is carried by another woman, have taken place at some medical institutions in Japan, without being backed by law.

The bill aims to clearly define and regulate assisted reproduction technologies involving third persons so that those in need of such technologies can receive the treatments properly and to prevent the technologies from becoming too commercialized.

The LDP's project team on assisted reproduction technologies is headed by LDP House of Councillors member Toshiharu Furukawa.

The outline allows surrogate births only in cases with conditions in which it is considered necessary from a medical point of view. Considering the physical and mental burden on surrogate mothers, only women including those whose uterus was removed because of illness will be allowed to utilize surrogacy.

The bill, if enacted, will allow provision of sperm, eggs and fertilized eggs. However, buying and selling them and providing compensation for them will be prohibited.