



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for treatment and counselling for drug addicts. “Drug-dependent people should not be treated with discrimination; they should be treated by medical experts and counsellors. Drug addiction is a disease, not a crime,” Ban Ki-moon said at the launch of the 2011 World Drug Report at UN Headquarters in New York 23 June.

The Secretary-General said that out of 210 million illicit drug users alive in the world today, some 200,000 people died each year. “Every three minutes, someone dies from this preventable disease. These numbers add up to a global tragedy.”

Mr Ban said that he took up the issue of drug trafficking in his meetings with world leaders and senior officials. “I urge them to cooperate to stop the traffickers.”

“Traffickers break more than the law. They break the human spirit. They fuel terrorism and insurgency. They rob societies of peace.”

He added that he had recently established a Task Force to explore what more the United Nations could do through UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding operations - through development activities, and through disarmament work; a comprehensive and integrated approach was essential. The Secretary-General said that he depended largely on the leadership and expertise of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime which he said carried out life-saving activities in many countries around the globe.

“We were all reminded of the importance of this work, and the dangers involved, when four UNODC staff members and their pilots were killed in a plane crash last month in Bolivia. I offer my deepest sympathies to the families.”