



Address by the Permanent Observer of Italy  
to the Organization of American States  
Ambassador Roberto Nocella

Conference  
*“Promoting access to rights for youth in the Americas  
through sports and play”*

Washington, DC

October 16, 2024

Estimado Sr. Secretario General Almagro,

Estimadas Embajadoras y Embajadores,

Estimado Vicepresidente del grupo Ferrero,

Estimados colegas,

Señoras y Señores,

Hablaré en parte en español y en parte en inglés.

Es para mí un honor, un gran honor como Observador Permanente ante la OEA, y también en nombre de la Embajada de Italia en Washington, introducir este evento que se enmarca en un **novedoso acuerdo de colaboración** entre una importante organización internacional como la OEA y una empresa italiana, firmado en febrero de 2024 y a raíz del cual ya se realizaron dos eventos, en Argentina y Uruguay.

Ferrero es una empresa cuyos orígenes se remontan a la **ciudad de Alba en Piamonte** y que, tras la Segunda guerra mundial, tuvo que compensar en aquel entonces la escasez de cacao con un producto típico de la región: la avellana (o “*hazelnuts*” en inglés). De ahí salió primero el “*Giandujot*”, en homenaje a la famosa máscara italiana “Gianduja”, luego, a principio de la década de los cincuenta, la así llamada “*super-cream*” hasta llegar en 1964 a la “Nutella”, un producto icónico a nivel internacional entrado de lleno también en la cultura popular italiana.

We are very glad to host one of our great partners, FERRERO Group, at the Embassy of Italy here today. Through its corporate social responsibility program called “**Joy of moving**”, Ferrero aims to stimulate the practice of sports by highlighting the importance of movement and a healthy lifestyle from an early age. This initiative relies on **article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which states that every child has the right, and I quote, “to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

In this regard, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is engaged in developing a new form of diplomacy called “**sports diplomacy**,” whose objectives are manifold, aiming, primarily, at creating new opportunities for international cooperation. In particular, **sport enables the fulfilment of human rights such as the right to physical and mental health and the full development of human personality**, without any form of discrimination. Sport is, in particular, important for the advancement of women’s rights and for people with disabilities.

During the following panel discussion, the distinguished panelists will focus, in particular, on how a **balanced nutrition** also plays a crucial role in promoting wellness for all ages. A **balanced diet** combined with an **active lifestyle** is key to nurturing healthy and well-rounded individuals. Actually, the word “diet” in its original Greek form means exactly “lifestyle”.

The **Mediterranean diet** – inscribed by **UNESCO** in 2013 on the list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity – is an example of this balance: a harmonious blend of food products, ingredients and flavors that provides essential nutrients while promoting overall well-being.

Italy, among other countries, has fully embraced the spirit of the Mediterranean diet. Eating together, as we are used to, is a moment of social exchange and communication, an affirmation and renewal of family, group and community bonds.

**Italian cuisine** is deeply rooted in the Mediterranean diet. It is a testament to the rich legacy of quality, tradition (combined with innovation), health, joy, agricultural and industrial activities, and that we are proud to share globally thanks to the Italian diaspora too.

Nowadays, we are also promoting the candidacy of our cuisine to the **UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage**. The decision is expected to be taken in 2025 and we count on your support in this endeavor. As you can see, the symbol of the candidacy is a frying pan where both food products and monuments are sautéed on the assumption that Italian cuisine is a characterizing aspect of our culture.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people from the Italian Embassy who worked for the realization of this event.

I now leave the floor to the Secretary General of the OAS and thank him for being here today with us and for leading this initiative together with Ferrero.