



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

Project Launch

*“Strengthening of National Early Warning Systems on Drugs in OAS
Member States – Phase I”*

Washington D.C.

September 4, 2025

Muchas gracias y buenos días a todos.

Mr. Secretary of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security Ivan Marques,

Chief of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs,

Acting Executive Secretary of CICAD,

Head of the Italian National Observatory on Addiction and International Relations, Mr. Zapparoli,

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Thank you all very much for launching this event and for working with us.

Italy is proud to support such an important initiative, which is completely in line with Italian priorities and policies for the fight against drug trafficking and use.

As our Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, said, drugs destroy lives and the fight against drugs and pathological addiction is an absolute priority: for example, Italy was one of the first European countries to implement a 360-degree strategy against fentanyl.

The policy of Italy is to focus on people and to ensure that the State, the institutions, and services adopt a multidimensional approach to listen to the needs of the people. This implies that substance abusers are seen as people that can be cured and reintegrated into society. That

is why Italy is supporting another initiative, FOCTALI, for the reintegration of drug abusers into society.

But though rehabilitation is important, prevention is crucial. Italy's drug policy is characterized by a holistic approach that combines public health, security, and education. Within this framework, the Italian early warning system is not just a simple tool, but the heart of an agile and coordinated response strategy. This system is nourished by a robust information exchange network that connects hospitals, treatment centers, forensic laboratories, and law enforcement at regional and national levels. This flow of data allows health and security authorities to gain an almost real-time insight into emerging threats, such as the emergence of new synthetic drugs, and proactively respond to minimize harm. The Italian experience demonstrates that an early warning system is more than technology; it is a collaborative infrastructure that integrates all relevant actors.

At the international level, Italy has worked within the realm of the EU, the G7 and the United Nations. Now we are developing an innovative initiative also with the OAS, by supporting the Strengthening of National Early Warning Systems on Drugs in OAS member states.

The previous success of CICAD and the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs in training, technical assistance and capacity building, thanks to which several member States of the OAS have developed Early Warning Systems, makes us confident that this initiative will achieve great successes.

As you know, no one nation can overcome the drug crisis on its own, and therefore this project is aimed at exchanging information and experiences, and sharing best practices and lessons learned on drug policies.

Italy is proud to participate via its National Observatory on Addiction and International Relations, of which we have the pleasure of hearing, during the course of this event today, the Head, Mr. Andrea Zapparoli.

Y quiero también subrayar cómo el problema del tráfico de droga no conoce fronteras. Entonces para Italia es muy importante poder trabajar con países del hemisferio occidental, de la OEA, de America latina y del Caribe.

Para nosotros es una oportunidad también para estrechar lazos de una orilla a la otra del Atlántico. No hay tanta distancia: los intereses son comunes, sobre todo cuando se trata de trabajar juntos contra estas lacras - las drogas - que segan la vida de muchas personas. A veces, con la ingesta de algunas drogas, las personas se encuentran en una situación mortal sin darse cuenta.

Creo que el meollo de este proyecto que vamos a apoyar será la visita a Italia que se está planificando junto con la CICAD, que permitirá a representantes de algunos países de la región de poder tomar contacto con las realidades italianas y poder así conocer a personas que trabajan en este sector. Y también para nosotros será una gran oportunidad para poder, al mismo tiempo, estrechar relaciones que espero puedan ser

duraderas y útiles para todos los que estarán involucrados en este proyecto.

Quiero dar entonces la enhorabuena por el comienzo de esta trayectoria juntos, que espero pueda seguir y dar resultados. Seguramente para nosotros es una iniciativa muy novedosa y muy interesante. Espero que todos los que participarán puedan sacar provecho.

Eso era lo que quería decir a todos vosotros y gracias por participar esta mañana a este convenio virtual.

Roberto Nocella