



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

Roundtable Discussion on Synthetic Drugs in the Caribbean
CICAD/OAS
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Mrs. Laura-Lee Foster, Research Officer, National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) of Barbados

Ms. Keel County, Programme Officer of the National Drug Council, Ministry of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago

Ms. Michelle Nasseir, Deputy Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to join you today at this important Roundtable Discussion on Synthetic Drugs in the Caribbean, convened in the framework of the project “Strengthening of National Early Warning Systems on Drugs in OAS Member States - Phase 1.”

Italy greatly appreciates the tireless work of CICAD and the OAS in addressing the multifaceted and evolving challenges of drugs and public health in the Americas.

Italy is proud to support this initiative through its voluntary contribution, reaffirming both our belief in the value of multilateral collaboration and shared responsibility and our commitment to fight against the scourge of drugs. Italy's contribution to this program reflects our longstanding commitment to multilateralism and to cooperative approaches in confronting global threats, including those posed by synthetic drugs. These substances, with their rapid proliferation, high dangerousness, and often unpredictable effects, present a serious risk not only to individual and public health, but also to security, social cohesion and sustainable development—especially in vulnerable regions, and we must work together to build the institutional tools and strategic foresight required to detect and respond to these risks effectively.

In this context, **Early Warning Systems** play a vital role. They help countries monitor new substances, detect trends, and implement timely, evidence-based responses. Strengthening these systems is not just a technical necessity—it is a life-saving investment, and a critical component of resilient, health-centered anti-drug policies.

We are especially pleased to take part in today's roundtable as part of this broader capacity-building effort, as they allow us to learn from one another, to identify common challenges, and to move forward together in a spirit of solidarity and shared purpose.

We know from our own national experience that the fight against synthetic drugs must be comprehensive and cooperative. No single country or region can effectively tackle this phenomenon in isolation. It demands coordination among governments, health agencies, law enforcement bodies, and civil society, grounded in the respect for human rights, promotion of public health, and international solidarity.

Allow me also to note that this project is part of a broader partnership between Italy and CICAD. Just recently, we participated in the launch of the fourth phase of the project *“Strengthening Therapeutic Communities and Treatment Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean with Italian Support,”* an initiative that focuses on enhancing treatment services, promoting rehabilitation, and supporting social reintegration for individuals affected by substance use disorders.

Together, these two projects illustrate a **comprehensive, integrated, and holistic approach**—from early detection and

prevention, to treatment and recovery—grounded, as I said, in human rights and regional and international cooperation.

Today's discussion is a valuable opportunity to hear directly from national stakeholders in the Caribbean. Your insights, your experiences, and your leadership are essential to shaping a response that is regionally relevant and globally connected. We encourage frank dialogue and shared learning.

In closing, I want to reaffirm Italy's deep commitment to this shared work. We believe that only by joining efforts, building capacities, and supporting inclusive dialogue, we can respond effectively to the evolving challenges of synthetic drugs and substance use in the region.

We look forward to the outcomes of today's discussion and to continued collaboration with all partners represented here.

Thank you.

Roberto Nocella