



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

May 19, 2026

Governor Luis Francisco Ruíz Aguilar
Caquetá, Colombia
Via email

Dear Governor Ruíz Aguilar and Members of the Governors' Climate & Forests Task Force,

I am sorry I cannot be in Florencia with you this week, but I wanted to send my congratulations on this important meeting and my gratitude to Governor Ruíz Aguilar for hosting the 16th Annual Meeting of the Governors' Climate & Forests Task Force.

When we launched the Task Force in 2008, we believed that subnational leaders, governors, and regional officials with direct responsibility for the lands and communities in their care could do what national governments too often could not. We believed that if we worked together across borders, sharing knowledge and building real accountability, we could protect the forests that all our communities rely upon. Seeing this network grow to where it stands today, with member jurisdictions spanning the tropics and a gathering of this scale taking root in the Colombian Amazon, is exactly what we hoped for and more.

The theme you have chosen, a New Forest Economy for Climate Action, is exactly right for this moment. The world does not need to choose between economic opportunity and environmental protection. The forests of Caquetá, of the Amazon basin, of Indonesia, West Africa, Mexico, and the American West all tell the same story: when communities have a real stake in standing forests, everyone wins. That is the case this Task Force has been making for sixteen years, and you are proving it with results.

I am especially proud to see so many governors and regional leaders gathered together this week. That kind of political will, expressed at the level where decisions are made, is unstoppable.

Thank you to Governor Ruíz Aguilar and the people of Caquetá for welcoming this community so generously. Thank you to the GCF Task Force secretariat, to the indigenous communities and local partners whose stewardship makes this work real, and to every governor and delegate who made the journey to Florencia. Keep up the incredible work.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger".

Arnold Schwarzenegger