

# COVID-19 PULSE

Start off with a weekly recap of the main Public Affairs developments across **LATAM**.

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**STATS: 299,126 cases of COVID-19, 5,877 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Alberto Fernández officialized the extension of the quarantine until August 30<sup>th</sup> for the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, and certain localities of some provinces. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Government of the Province of Buenos Aires enacted the law by which the economic and financial emergency was extended until the end of the year. It establishes fiscal benefits, credit lines, and special assistance funds for SMES located in the Province. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the Argentinian Chamber of E- Commerce, sales through internet increased 84% since the mandatory social isolation was first declared. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Senate approved and turned into law the initiative by which the current budget was extended, in order to deal with the economic, social and sanitary consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to a report released by INDEC, while the general monthly inflation of July was of 1.9%, food and beverage registered a mere 1.3% price variation. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The President announced that Argentina will produce the vaccine developed by scientists of the university of Oxford, which already is on Phase N° 3 of its testing process. According to Fernández, it may be available in the first semester of 2021. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Looking forward to strengthening the tax collection, the initiative to extend the moratorium of payments for national taxes was approved and turned into law. By this initiative, the temporary scope of the program will be extended, and big companies will be included. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, is working on a project to develop a technological pole in the city of Comodoro Rivadavia, Chubut. The initiative aims to promote strategic sectors of the economy, through the articulation of the public and private sectors. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Superintendence of Work Risks approved the protocol for the gradual reincorporation of workers to their jobs, which consists on several general recommendations, and certain requirements for each industrial activity in particular. ([Source](#))



STATS: 3.363.807 cases of COVID-19, 101.936 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The highest approval rate of the Bolsonaro government since his inauguration comes shortly after Brazil surpassed the 100 thousand deaths registered by Covid-19. Growth in approval comes from groups that are the target of emergency aid. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Minister of Health, Eduardo Pazuello, presented to the World Health Organization (WHO) the actions taken by the Brazilian government to combat the pandemic. However, he limited himself to talking about the total number of people recovered. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The IBC-Br (Economic Activity Index of the Central Bank), considered an informal "preview" of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), shrank 6.28% in the first half, strongly impacted by measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The reopening of theaters, cinemas and event houses in the city of Rio de Janeiro was postponed for another 15 days. The announcement was made this afternoon by Mayor Marcelo Crivella, who extended the new measures to relax social isolation for another two weeks. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Bars and restaurants in the West Zone of São Paulo were crowded on Saturday night (15), the second weekend after the City Hall released the night operation, disregarding safety rules. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The government of São Paulo announced on Wednesday (12) the expansion of the integrated monitoring program for cases of the new coronavirus to 120 new cities in the state. The initiative integrates screening, testing and tracking of contact points for confirmed and suspected cases of the disease. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Online shopping increased during the coronavirus pandemic, and many people found delivery an option to make money in the crisis. But as buying a motorcycle can be an obstacle, startups have noticed an increase in demand for the rental service. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Twenty-two states and the Federal District have their stocks of drugs for the intubation of critically ill covid-19 patients in the red, lasting up to five days or less. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** This month, the Brazilian toy industry enters the delivery phase of products prepared for Children's Day, a date that corresponds to 40% of its annual sales. The conclusion is that manufacturers went through the worst months of the pandemic with luck. ([Source](#))



STATS: 100,344 cases of COVID-19, 4,058 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Legislative Assembly (ALP) approved a law that shields the new date of the elections. This law was promulgated by President Jeanina Añez. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mayor Luis Revilla announced that the rigid quarantine, announced for the following week in the city of La Paz, has been suspended until further notice, due to the situation of blockades that have affected the food supply. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Andean Community digitized procedures to facilitate the trade of cosmetic products. From now until December 31 of this year, in the case of the trade of cosmetic products, the Mandatory Health Notification (NSO) issued in a member country will be accepted digitally. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Health Ministry reported that the number of municipalities with a high rate of COVID-19 infections increased from 111 to 121 the last week, and almost 50% of the 339 municipalities in the country have medium risk. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Small poultry producers from Cochabamba protested this Thursday by discarding their chickens, killed by lack of food. The producers complained that due to the blockages, their chickens are starving. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Health Minister clarified that in Bolivia there is no difficulty or restriction in the sale of medicines but that these must have the health registration granted by the National Pharmacological Commission (CFN) to comply with current regulations. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Central Bank of Bolivia adopted five monetary policy measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the economy. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Minister of Productive Development and Plural Economy Óscar Ortiz announced the virtualization of 55 procedures that are carried out at Fundempresa using the digital signature, to streamline and modernize the public service. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The union sector of the city of Bermejo asks the Bolivian Foreign Ministry to manage a commercial exchange corridor with Argentina for the legal admission of various products, including toys, textile garments and household appliances such as it happened before the pandemic. ([Source](#))



STATS: 387,502 cases of COVID-19, 10,513 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Piñera announced the public investment plan for US\$ 34 billion, "Chile se Recupera", which includes projects in transportation, infrastructure, health and agriculture, and seeks to create 250,000 jobs, to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** New cases of COVID-19 decreased 31% in the Metropolitan Region due to confinement measures and the Step by Step plan developed by the health authority. The plan includes five phases to slowly end mandatory quarantines ([Source](#)).



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Chilean Internet sales application, Cornershop, signed an alliance with the Cencosud group that will allow customers to buy without an 18% surcharge. The measure will also benefit consumers in Brazil, Peru and Colombia ([Source](#)).



**[COVID RELATED]** From this Monday, August 17, children living in cities with more than 14 days in obligatory quarantine will be able to request permits to leave their homes with a responsible adult ([Source](#)).



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Although the authorities consider that the consumption of alcohol in the population increased in recent months, the liquor stores assure that their sales have fallen 70% as a result of the pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** More than five million Chileans will receive the COVID-19 vaccine when the drug begins its mass production and reaches the country, according announced the Health Ministry ([Source](#)).



**[ECONOMY]** The government is evaluating the socioeconomic impact the pandemic has generated in Chilean homes, through a survey that was carried out during July by telephone, to 5,000 homes. The results will be published in September ([Source](#)).



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Chileans students created a platform to donate used computers to other students. The website connects those who can gift a device, with children who need one to attend virtual classes from home ([Source](#)).



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Millennium Institute of Immunology and Immunotherapy assured that the Chilean vaccine against COVID-19 would begin to be manufactured at the end of this year and would begin clinical studies in 2021 ([Source](#)).



STATS: 468,332 cases of COVID-19, 15,097 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Carlos Camargo, director of Fededepartamentos, was elected as the new Ombudsman by the House of Representatives. The Liberal, Conservative, Radical Change, Democratic Center, and La U parties expressed their support for Camargo. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Bogotá started a new phase of the quarantine by localities. This measure has been applied since last July 13 and will remain in force until August 30. The localities are Usaquén, Chapinero, Teusaquillo, Puente Aranda, Antonio Nariño, Santa Fe, and La Candelaria. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** In the last 5 months, 1000 small businesses joined e-commerce platforms to increase their virtual and face-to-face presence in business opportunities in the country. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** President Iván Duque announced that the Government filed with an urgent message the bill to extend the Formal Employment Support Program (PAEF) until December 2020. The PAEF was designed by the National Government as a payroll subsidy instrument. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Mayor of Bogotá Claudia López revealed that pilot plans for restaurants would begin in September. More than a hundred streets will be closed to comply with social distancing measures. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Mayor of Bogotá Claudia López said that her administration would invest 204 billion COP for agreements with universities to investigate the best treatment and the best vaccine for Bogotá. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** According to ANIF, the annual inflation in the country continued to decline, and, for the first time in more than six years, it was below 2%. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** ICT Minister Karen Abudinen assured that Colombia is the only country in the region with a clear strategy to advance towards 5G technology, and that is why it will be a pioneer in Latin America. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The group that participated the most in June imports was manufacturers. Their total purchases were US 2,298.6 million, which represented a decrease of 25% compared to June 2019. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 101,751 cases of COVID-19, 6,083 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** On August 14, the Government of Ecuador ended the humanitarian visa period for Venezuelans. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility specified that all requests submitted by migrants until that day will be processed and addressed. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Juan Carlos Zevallos, Minister of Health, said that Ecuador has the capacity to manufacture vaccines against COVID-19. He stated that there have been several negotiations at the diplomatic level. They have had contact with pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer and AstraZeneca. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** On August 13, Ecuador and Chile signed the Trade Integration Agreement. The agreement includes tariff benefits for 160 Ecuadorian products, benefiting 710 companies in the country. The last agreement allowed 97% of Ecuadorian goods to Chile without taxes; this new agreement achieves 100% coverage. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Government explained that the considerable increase in cases in Quito is due to the strategies to search for cases through brigades. This strategy has allowed for more tests and improved diagnostic capabilities. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Ecuadorian Minister of Production and Foreign Trade, Ivan Ontaneda, said that he hopes that very soon China will lift the limitation on the entry of products from a shrimp company from Ecuador. The limitation arose after coronavirus contamination was detected on the walls of a container. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Government, in company with the private sector, presented the application ASÍ: a free digital tool that will allow knowing if someone was close to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Association of Automotive Companies of Ecuador (Aeade) mentioned that between January and July 2020 there was a 47% drop in vehicle sales. This is why the union has promoted virtual fairs through digital platforms. This is the case of the Autosale 2020, which will take place from August 13 to 23. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Minister of Health, Juan Carlos Zevallos, stated that there is a delay in the payment of the salaries of the health system personnel. The declaration was made in the Legislative Commission on Workers' Rights. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to the Ministry of Labor, 1,207 companies cut the working day in a half to more than 9,319 workers in Ecuador. This measure may be applied for one year from its registration and may be renewable for the same period only once. One of the sectors with the greatest application is the manufacturing sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 522,162 cases of COVID-19, 56,757 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) declared a 30-day national mourning period in honor of the people who have died due to COVID-19. The National Flag will be at half mast from August 13 to September 11. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judicial Power ratified that local elections in the states of Coahuila and Hidalgo will be carry out on October 18, as planned by the National Electoral Institute (INE). ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Alibaba seeks to encourage SMB's in Mexico by creating skills and rapidly digitizing online sales through their accelerator Atomic 88, that creates digital hubs in highly productive industrialized towns; two "digital villages" in Guanajuato have already been part of the program. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Undersecretary of Health, Hugo Lopez-Gatell, assured that the definition of the COVID-19 vaccination scheme will be defined after the results of Phase III of its development and after the sanitary authorization in the country. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Oaxaca's Congress reformed the state's Law on the Rights of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents to ban the distribution, and sale of sugary drinks and junk food; this measure responds to COVID-19's disproportionate impact on people with obesity and diabetes. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The governments of Mexico and Argentina announced, in collaboration with Fundación Slim and AstraZeneca the development of a vaccine for COVID-19 that could be ready by the end of the year. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Mexico's Central Bank (BANXICO) reduced the reference rate by 50 points, from 5% to 4.5% due to the deep contraction of economic activity during the second quarter of the year. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Private universities and some companies are interested in adopting the app HealthID, developed by the Mexican company Incode Technologies, that identifies if an employee could enter the workplace with face recognition technology, it could, for example, identify if the person is wearing PPE. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to data from the ranking 'The 500 most important companies in Mexico', the top 10 companies in the last 50 years continue to be from the oil, manufacturing and commerce sector. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 10,135 cases of COVID-19, 145 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Through Decree N° 3943, the Executive Power officialized the extension of Phase N° 4 of the quarantine until August 30<sup>th</sup>, at a national level. The areas of Central, Alto Paraná and Asunción were excepted from this extension, and have remained on stricter quarantine phases. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federico González, expressed that although seven humanitarian flights are scheduled for September, there's not a fixed date for the reopening of international airports yet, due to the epidemiological context. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** An important change in the economic team was carried forward by the Executive Power this week. Carmen María Rodríguez was appointed Vice Minister of Economy, in replacement of Humberto Colman, who became part of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Executive Power officialized the extension of the strictest quarantine phase for the Department of Alto Paraná, until August 23<sup>rd</sup>. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Chamber of Representatives decided to postpone the debate on the bill to implement a stimulus package of measures for the gastronomic and tourism sectors, whose emergency was recently declared. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministers of Labor and Social Security, and Industry and Commerce announced the implementation of a strategy for the economic transformation of Paraguay and the reactivation of employment, which implies the promotion of new technologies and knowledge for the productive sector. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Labor and Social Security Ministry is offering technical formation on E-commerce and web design - among others-, under the framework of the integral plan for the labor reactivation and economic transformation, carried forward. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Health Ministry officialized the provision of respirators, among other medical supplies, by which the installed capacity of intensive therapy treatments has been increased, to face the population's growing needs for medical attention. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** After 3 consecutive months of productive decline, the Monthly Estimator of Economic Activity registered an interannual increase of 1.2% in June, based on information released by the Paraguayan Central Bank. Among the manufacturing industries, the best performances were found in the meat, beverage, leather, oils, mineral, chemical, and shoe industries. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 525,803 cases of COVID-19, 26,075 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government reinforced the containment measures and the quarantine for COVID-19. Social gatherings were prohibited, and the mandatory social immobilization returned on Sundays. ([Source](#))



**LOCAL [MEASURES]** The Government will install 50 new temporary markets in 21 regions of the country by the end of August, which will have health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Peruvian Chamber of Electronic Commerce (Capece) presented the initiative called “compralealperu.pe”, in collaboration with the Ministry of Production (Produce) and Indecopi, which seeks to combat informality from electronic commerce, increasing the productivity of micro and small businesses. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Health Ministry is planning to acquire the vaccine through the COVAX Facility. Also, the ministry assured that it has confidentiality agreements with four or five international laboratories for direct purchase. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Agricultural Business Financing Program (FAE-Agro) was implemented to inject capital into small producers and ensure the 2020-2021 campaign. Currently, 4,000 million soles have been allocated. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Comprehensive Health Insurance (SIS) launched the third national contracting process for private clinics that can treat cases of severe acute respiratory failure (SARI) of patients with covid-19 who require a mechanical ventilator. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) authorized the transfer of 256 million 109,381 soles in favor of 458 local governments to finance 1,784 immediate intervention activities this year in the framework of the national health emergency. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The president of the Council of Ministers, Walter Martos, pointed out that the distance education program “I learn at home” will be part of the integral pedagogical proposal of the Ministry of Education since 2021. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (Mincetur) reported that 41 micro and small businesses of the Tourism sector and artisans of Peru were awarded 2.8 million soles offered by the Program “Turismo Emprande”. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 1.440 cases of COVID-19, 38 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Government approval fell relative to previous months. In July, 59% of the Uruguayan population approved the management of President Lacalle Pou, while in June it had been 63%. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Minister of Defense said that they will strengthen border control posts after a new outbreak in Rivera, emphasizing migration controls, temperature, disinfection and swabbing for those who enter the country. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** So far this year, 71% of consumers have not changed their habit when it comes to buying products. 20% began to order more by phone, 12% bought more products online and 11% chose to order food through the different applications. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** In recent days there has been an increase of cases in border cities, mainly in the northeast of the country. Rivera Department registered a new outbreak with more than 30 cases from the Brazilian city of Santana do Livramento. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Authorities from the Ministry of Economy and the private sector agreed in the results achieved in the framework of the price agreement. Both highlighted that the commitment was fulfilled in a very high percentage, and that it served to moderate inflation. Meanwhile, the businessmen conveyed that they do not plan to mark prices. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Uruguay and Guyana are the only countries in South America without “community transmission” of coronavirus. The director of Infectious Diseases at the University of the Republic published on his Twitter account that to continue in this phase “we have to socialize less” and respect social distancing.. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Consumer Confidence Index fell again in July for the second consecutive month (0.3 points), reaching 44.8, remaining in the zone of moderate pessimism for the fifth consecutive month. Compared to the same month of 2019, the CCI is 7 points lower. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Students from a high school in Rivera create a smart mask and a gel alcohol dispenser. The mask says with an LED light the degrees and the device gives this product when anyone approaches. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The manufacturing industry had been going through serious difficulties in recent years, and the arrival of COVID-19 represented a serious blow, especially for those companies that were already in a critical situation before the pandemic. ([Source](#))