

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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**STATS:** 342,154 cases of COVID-19, 7,079 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Minister of Productive Development, confirmed that the Government is currently working on credit lines for the reactivation of companies from strategic sectors, which would replace the current Assistance Plan. These credits will be tied to objectives of employment sustenance and development. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Government of the City of Buenos Aires continues its plan towards the gradual flexibilization, and this week authorized the reopening of hotels, and shops situated on central areas. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Ministry of Economy extended the scope of the functions assigned to the Counsel of Coordination for the Financial Inclusion, to strengthen the policies on this subject. The Counsel was required to promote the development of digital finances. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** After being approved at the Congress, the modification of the current budget was finally regulated by the Executive Power, reassigning special budget lines to deal with the consequences of COVID-19, by strengthening the financing of the Health Ministry. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Alimentary companies, grouped in business chambers, presented a proposal to the Government, to carry forward a moderate price increase in the products that belong to the food & beverage industry, but manifested their positive insight towards the continuity of the Program Precios Cuidados. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The National Program of Sanitary Technology Monitoring was created by Decree, under the aegis of the Health Ministry, to supervise the adequate use, testing and prioritization of technology applied to health, assessing its efficiency, security, impact on health, and cost. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The team specialized on external trade, constituted by authorities from several ministries to design policies for the economic reactivation, had their first meeting, in which they highlighted that their focus would be on boosting exportation. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** By Decree, the Executive Power declared internet, telephony, and cable television as essential public services, which means that their tariffs will be regulated by the Government, to guarantee the people's access to them. Moreover, their values were frozen until the end of the year. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to a report released by the National Confederation of SMES, the SMES' production dropped 13.6% interannually, compared to last year. During the first seven months of 2020, the sector accumulated a fall of 22.2%. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 3.627.961 cases of COVID-19, 115.476 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Despite the fact that commerce has returned to work in practically the whole country, President Jair Bolsonaro published a video this Sunday morning defending again the reopening of establishments. He went on to say that the government cannot maintain emergency aid of R \$ 600 per month. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** A survey carried out by testing students in the São Paulo municipal school system indicated that 16.1% of children and adolescents between 4 and 14 years of age were infected with the new coronavirus and contracted the disease. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** In times of pandemic, the National Social Security Institute (INSS), in partnership with the Digital Government Secretariat (SGD) and Dataprev, begins the pilot project of life proof by facial biometrics from August 20th. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** The interim Minister of Health, Eduardo Pazuello, said that the federal government was unable to meet the demand for chloroquine made by states and municipalities. The Army, however, said it has almost 1 million pills in its stocks. [\(Source\)](#)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Research points to new eating habits in the pandemic, among them the preference for healthier and more practical foods. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** A survey showed that, for the first time in the pandemic, Covid-19 transmission may be starting to slow down in Brazil. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** The crisis driven by the pandemic of the new coronavirus caused the collection of taxes to fall in at least 19 capitals of Brazilian states in the first half of 2020. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** President Jair Bolsonaro enacted two articles that authorize the practice of telemedicine for all areas of health for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Brazilian industry continues to show signs of recovery and, for the third consecutive month, showed improvement in the indicators and is close to the level of activity seen before the covid-19 pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



**STATS:** 108,427 cases of COVID-19, 4,442 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** With at least five norms, the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) tries to govern from the Legislative. They affirm that their function is to legislate and supervise the government. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Mayor's Office of La Paz is analyzing the biosafety protocols for the resumption of business or economic activities that were paused due to the health emergency. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The economic and digital inclusion of women will be key for the economic reactivation in the Andean countries. Jorge Hernando Pedraza, General Secretary of the Andean Community, assured that this organization promotes the reactivation of intra-regional trade, supporting women entrepreneurs. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Ministry of Health received a donation of biosafety materials and tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19 from the Association of Private Banks of Bolivia (Asoban). ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The demand for organic products increased by 60% due to coronavirus, which has encouraged family farming. In Bolivia, family farming represents more than 724,375 productive units, involving 2 million family farmers. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Health Ministry rejected reports from some media outlets such as the New York Times, regarding the number of deaths from COVID-19 in the country, assuring that the data published does not have a reliable source, because Bolivia has a record of mortality. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The executive director of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) reported that, despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national economy is showing signs of reactivation, and less negative variations. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The National Telehealth Program of the Health Ministry received the support of Ipas-Bolivia, a non-governmental organization that delivered technological equipment such as conference systems, computer equipment, webcams, and LED televisions. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** A report from the Bolivian Institute of Foreign Trade (IBCE) of June 2020, Bolivian exports of textiles and jewelry fell by up to 67%. ([Source](#))





**STATS:** 399,568 cases of COVID-19, 10,916 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Sebastián Piñera announced the return of professional football to the stadiums, after almost five months of activity paralysis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The First Division and First B championship will begin next Saturday, August 29 ([Source](#)).



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** 30% of the Metropolitan Region remains without quarantine since this Monday. 17 of 52 municipalities are in phase 2 of the Step by Step Plan, which allows more mobility and fewer restrictions on the people ([Source](#)).



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Between Monday, August 31 and Wednesday, September 2, a new version of CyberDay will be held. E-commerce has been a protagonist during the pandemic, so an increase in participants and promotions is expected ([Source](#)).



**[COVID RELATED]** Health Ministry announced that it will keep the public hospitals expanded to 94% in 2021 due to possible outbreaks of COVID-19. The authority will add 600 beds to the 640 beds that were before the pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Chilean bottler Embonor has begun to experience a rebound in its sales, after the sales fell 0.4% compared to the same period last year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** Health Ministry reported that eleven out of fifteen provinces in the country decreased its cases of COVID-19. The variation of positive cases was - 12% in the last days, with a national incidence of 68 cases per 100 thousand people ([Source](#)).



**[ECONOMY]** A study carried out by the Chilean Security Association and the consulting firm McKinsey, revealed that 58% of Chileans companies plan to return to its offices at the end of the year or at the beginning of 2021 ([Source](#)).



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Virtual Police Station registered a maximum of 1,429,146 permits in 24 hours. The request for these police permits has allowed people living in quarantined cities to move around the city for limited times ([Source](#)).



**[MANUFACTURING]** Chilean coronavirus vaccine prepares first human trials. The drug has already started studies and hopes to start the clinical phase in 2021. Unlike other prototypes, it is intended to be applied to newborns ([Source](#)).



**STATS: 551,696 cases of COVID-19, 17,612 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Iván Duque announced that Colombia would enter a period of “selective” quarantine. The restrictions on events and large crowds will continue during September while the government evaluates the spread of the virus. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mayor Claudia López announced that the quarantines by localities in Bogotá would end. López said that the retail trade would work from Thursday to Sunday and the construction from Monday to Saturday. Besides, she said that the hotel and tourism sector is reactivated and that restaurants will have open-air service. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Between March 20 and July 20, the Superintendency of Industry and Commerce (SIC) received some 3,400 complaints related to online sales. Most of them due to breaches in deliveries, contractual conditions, and misleading advertising. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** El Dorado International Airport in Bogotá, the Rafael Núñez International Airport in Cartagena, the Palonegro Airport of Bucaramanga, and the Camilo Daza Airport of Cúcuta obtained the 'Check-in Certificado' biosafety seal, from the Trade Ministry ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Colombian Government authorized the pilot plans to reopen the country's bars, but these establishments will not be able to sell alcoholic beverages. Mayor of Bogotá, Claudia López, authorized the sale of liquor in the pilot of open-air restaurants and gastro bars ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The government announced that Colombia would participate in clinical trials of a candidate vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Government presented a new strategy to attract more foreign investment to Colombia between 2020-2022. The priority will be foreign investment in mega-investments, tourism projects, promotion of the shipyard industry, and e-invoicing. Colombia expects non-mining investment for US 11.500 million. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** President Iván Duque and ICT Minister Karen Abudinen presented the ICT Mission 2022 project that seeks to train 100,000 people in Colombia in software development and programming over two years. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Trade Ministry reported that as of August 15, more than 254,000 manufacturing, service and trade companies restarted work in different parts of the country. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 108,289 cases of COVID-19, 6,322 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The political parties and movements announced their presidential candidates and their candidacy must be approved by the CNE. The elections will be on February 7. Also, it is necessary to highlight that the candidate Andres Arauz is the candidate of the Democratic Center party -left party- and his vice-presidential formula will be former president Rafael Correa. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** President Lenin Moreno gave a loan for the economic reactivation in Guayaquil. The credit is part of the Reactivate Ecuador program, which has USD 1,150 million that will be allocated to the most affected sectors during the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** On September 16, imported digital services will begin to pay value-added tax (VAT) in Ecuador, according to the regulations for the Tax Simplification and Progressivity Law. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Ecuador activates the 'COVID' squads to avoid new pandemic chaos. The squads will be made up of criminalistics personnel, doctors, fumigators, and funeral directors to avoid further deaths in Quito due to the increase of COVID-19 cases. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The restrictions on the sale of liquor from Friday to Sunday by the Emergency Operations Committee (COE) will end on Monday, August 31. The prohibition of the sale of liquor is exempted in category 4 and tourist restaurants, where the consumption of alcohol is allowed as an accompanying drink. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The State of Israel donated 120 biosecurity kits to the Ministry of Health for medical personnel. Kits include surgical gowns, gloves, surgical masks, and biosafety suits. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The government presented Decree 1130, which extends the Productive Development Law for 24 months. This law seeks the exemption of the Income Tax and Currency Outflow to companies that make new productive investments. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** More than 156,000 people downloaded the ASI app to find out if they were close to someone infected with COVID-19. The Minister of Government Maria Paula Romo highlighted that Ecuador is one of the pioneers in the region when developing the tool. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Productive Development Law has generated 104 investment contracts for USD 2,546 million in two years. In 2019 the Government received USD 1,150 million. 56% of investment in 2019 went to the manufacturing industry, followed by tourism and the supply of electricity and gas. ([Source](#))





STATS: 560,164 cases of COVID-19, 60,480 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) shared on his Sunday Message only “good news”: according to official data, the rate of COVID-19 contagion and deaths are decreasing, August has been the first month with no jobs lost since March and Mexico is participating in five different vaccine research protocols. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** After Mexico City shifted to a medium –level risk of contagion according to the epidemiological traffic light system, eleven piers in the touristic attraction in Xochimilco were reopened for the use of *trajineras* under strict health and safety measures. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Federal Economic Competition Commission (COFECE, by its Spanish acronym) has initiated an investigation for potential ‘relative monopolistic practices’ in the digital advertising market in Mexico; the investigation will last at least 120 days. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Minister of Public Education, Esteban Moctezuma, and president AMLO celebrated the start of the new school year. More than 30 million students in public schooling will attend classes broadcasted on television and radio and will follow workbooks made available online. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to Mexico City’s government data, around 90,000 bars and nightclubs have reopened under a “restaurant” model, serving food and beverages while limiting their capacity to 30% occupancy. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** According to the World Health Organization the situation in Mexico is “complex” as many people are being underdiagnosed or diagnosed late, especially affecting poor and indigenous communities. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** According to a survey conducted by Bank of America Securities, investors are mainly concerned about government decisions in Mexico (54%), the impact of an economic slowdown in the United States (36%), and only 3% said they were concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Indian device that neutralizes the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in closed spaces, named SHYCOCAN, will be manufactured in Mexico for its distribution in the United States and Latin America. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The electronics manufacturers Foxconn and Pegatron are seeking to open new factories in Mexico, which would add to the 5 factories already based in the country. ([Source](#))





**STATS:** 13,602 cases of COVID-19, 219 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Executive Power announced new containment measures for the economic recovery of the country, under the framework of the Plan Ñapu'ã Paraguay. These new initiatives, include a Regime of several Fiscal Benefits. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** By Decree, the National Executive Power officialized slightly less restrictive measures for the Department of Alto Paraná, than the formerly valid ones, though the region is still not considered ready to enter a new quarantine phase. These will be in force until September 6<sup>th</sup>. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the e-commerce platforms sector, transactions through e-commerce and digital payments almost doubled their original levels, during the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Executive Power formalized moderate flexibilization measures for the areas of Asunción and Central, which will be in force for two weeks. The Government called this new phase a “social quarantine” ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The list of beneficiaries of the Program for the SMES's Competitiveness, organized by the Industry and Commerce Ministry, was published, and most of the elected companies, belong to the alimentary industry. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni confirmed that the Government will implement stricter measures, concerning the current flexibilization process that Paraguay is undergoing, to control better the COVID-19 outbreak. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** President Mario Abdo Benítez expressed his positive opinion towards the external financial aid received by the National Government for the reactivation of the economy, which has already reached 30.7% of the GDP. He stated that it is a necessary process, considering the development and infrastructure needs of the country. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Minister of Information and Communication Technology signed two fundamental agreements with the National Direction of Intellectual Property, by which the Government seeks to boost the digital transformation of the country. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Yesterday, the campaign “Paraguay como vos” was formally launched. This campaign seeks to promote the consumption of products made by national industries, looking forward to protect and develop the national sources of employment. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 594,326 cases of COVID-19, 27,663 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The President of the Republic, Martín Vizcarra, announced that the second Universal Family Bonus of 760 soles will be delivered from September to more than 8 million households for the benefit of 28 million peruvians. ([Source](#))



**LOCAL [MEASURES]** The health authorities in Cusco intensified their actions to stop the advance of the coronavirus and enabled 12 points to carry out rapid and molecular tests to identify possible cases of coronavirus within the framework of the "Covid-10,000" campaign. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration (Sunat) approved the Single Register of Taxpayers (RUC) in digital, which can be obtained online using a cell phone or a computer connected to the internet. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Foreign Minister Mario López Chávarri estimated that by the beginning of 2021 Peru would already have vaccines against COVID-19, as a result of the negotiations that have been taking place both at a bilateral and multilateral level, to achieve that objective. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Sierra y Selva Exportadora organized a virtual business roundtable, which generated purchase intentions for more than 8 million soles for the next 12 months. It had the participation of 3,543 organized producers of oregano, native potato, maca, among others, from different regions of the country. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Dr. Carlos Castillo, immunization advisor to the Ministry of Health, reported that the vaccines against the COVID-19 vaccines and those of the National Scheme will be totally free. Next week the Immunizations Directorate will present the vaccination strategy to the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Faced with the proposals of Congress, the Government proposes the delivery of a compensatory bonus for 1,300 million soles for contributors to the ONP, which will allow them to continue active in the National Pension System (SNP) and remain in Essalud. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** A team of researchers has designed a portable cabin that guarantees the protection of health personnel who are in charge of taking samples to discard COVID-19. The prototype, designed by the Peruvian startup Tinnitus Peru, has been tested by the National Institute of Health (INS). ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Ministry of Production confirmed the prioritization of the construction of 16 industrial parks in 14 regions of the country. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1.527 cases of COVID-19, 42 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government, announced that Uruguay will reopen its borders to travelers from the European Union in the short term. The measure is a gesture of reciprocity with these nations since our country is the only one in Latin America that has been enabled since June for its citizens to enter Europe. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Authorities urged population to stay at home the night of August 24, date of one of the most important national celebrations known as the "Noche de la Nostalgia" to support the health control of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Chamber of Digital Economy of Uruguay (CEDU) released new data on trends in digital consumption of Uruguayans, based on two surveys conducted by the consulting firm Cifra, showing how the pandemic boosted e-commerce. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** 64% of Covid-19 cases in Uruguay were due to contact with a confirmed positive patient. The incidence of the disease is higher in women, but mortality rate is higher in men, according to a report from the Ministry of Public Health. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** On August 11, the price agreement that the National Executive had signed with businessmen and small merchants to try to contain inflation in the short term ended after three months of validity. A week later, prices had almost no variations in large stores. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Medical guilds declare themselves in a state of alert and great concern. The Medical Union announced a "pre-conflict in the doorway" due to the lack of progress in the negotiation for salary and budget. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The unemployment rate stood at 10.7% in June, which represents a percentage point difference with the estimated value for the previous month (9.7%). Uruguay had not registered such a high figure for its unemployment rate since August 2006, when the level was 10.68%. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Coronavirus UY exposure alerts may be used in other countries besides Uruguay. The developers of the private sector app will grant the State the intellectual property rights. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Indebtedness of the industrial sector increased 3.3% and reached US\$ 2,250 million at the end of June. The Chamber of Industries estimates that debt will represent 41% of the sector's GDP. ([Source](#))