

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 417,735 cases of COVID-19, 8,730 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Executive announced the adhesion of 99% of bondholders under foreign law to the exchange proposal. Now, the Government will go for a debt restructuring plan with the IMF, that is to hold a visit in coming weeks. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Province of Buenos Aires decided not only not to relax the quarantine, but even increase restrictions in 11 municipalities, including some urban centers as the City of Mar del Plata and Olavarria. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] While fintechs in Latam achieved investments for over US\$ 8 billion, Argentina is the third destination in the region for such funds, granting only 3.6% after Brazil and Mexico. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] A new extension of the mandatory quarantine was declared until September 20. The measure comes amidst increase in cases and deaths while the Government seeks to reinforce mechanisms to contain the outbreaks. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] During a meeting with COPAL, the Secretary for Quality in Health, Arnaldo Medina, announced that the labeling project they are working on is for a graphic system that warns of sodium, sugar and saturated fats and sweeteners included, while measuring by 100 grams or 100 milliliters. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Superintendence of Health Services will destine another ARS 1.5 billion to health insurance companies to compensate the decrease in their revenue, caused by the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The initiative on one-time contribution for major fortunes was finally introduced to the Congress. It would consist of a 2 to 3.5% scale to be applied as of ARS 200 million patrimony. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Since the enter into force of the trade agreement between Argentina and Chile, the charges for roaming on mobile communications between the two countries was suppressed. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] In occasion of the Industry Day, to be celebrated on September 2nd, President Alberto Fernández will participate of the UIA event, as a sign of support while it is also expected to make announcements on coming measures for the sector. ([Source](#))



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



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The federal government did not allocate emergency resources for basic education in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Covid-19 led to the closure of schools across the country and the need for network adaptations for remote education. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] After more than six months, the new coronavirus reached all 645 cities in the state of São Paulo, according to the state government. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Research points out impacts of the pandemic on small businesses and the digital transformation driven in several sectors. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Brazilian government has confirmed to the WHO (World Health Organization) that it will participate in the worldwide covid-19 vaccine alliance. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Survey measured the impact of the pandemic on the quality and quantity of food that Brazilian children are consuming and indicated that nine million Brazilians stopped eating due to lack of money. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Butantan Institute's vaccine factory complex can be expanded to produce 400 million doses if the Ministry of Health agrees to invest R \$ 1.9 billion in the project. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Consolidated public sector accounts, which include the federal government, states, municipalities and state-owned companies, recorded a primary deficit related to the increase in extraordinary expenses authorized to combat the new coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Commerce and the industrial sector were the first to experiment with a series of new technologies and solutions to minimize the risks of contracting Covid-19 and allow social circulation and return to activities. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Industry confidence in Brazil rose for the fourth consecutive month in August, recovering almost the total losses recorded at the height of the coronavirus crisis, according to the Foundation Getulio Vargas (FGV). ([Source](#))



STATS: 115,354 cases of COVID-19, 4,938 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government approved a Supreme Decree that established a new phase of post-confinement. This phase maintains some quarantine restrictions but softens others, with the aim of both preserving the health of the population and helping the economy to recover. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Mayor's Office of Cochabamba decided to extend the hours of movement of transport, commerce, and others. On Sundays, the rigid quarantine is maintained from September 1 to 30 within the post-confinement plan in the municipality. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Bolivia inaugurates its Pacific fiber optic connection on September 3. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Avifavir, a Russian medicine against COVID-19, already has a sanitary registration in Bolivia and will arrive in September. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Eastern Agricultural Chamber (CAO), through a public statement, rejected the Popular Action filed by activists who propose to prevent the use of genetically modified seeds in the national agribusiness. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Legislative Assembly (ALP) approved two laws related to health, the voluntary donation of hyperimmune plasma, and the free care for COVID-19 patients in private clinics. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The unemployment rate in the country registered 11.8%, one of the highest in the last 30 years. The National Institute of Statistics (INE) affirms that 7.9% is the effect of the coronavirus pandemic. Among the most affected sectors are construction, fast food service, and commerce. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] According to the Chamber of Exporters, biotechnology is inevitable to reactivate the economy. It is a valuable tool for the sustainable development of the country, given the potential it has to improve production processes and contributes to food security. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The presidential candidate for the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Luis Arce, proposed better industrialization of the country through a wealth tax. ([Source](#))



STATS: 411,726 cases of COVID-19, 11,289 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Sebastián Piñera met with the Electoral Service of Chile (Servel) to analyze and review all the elements that guarantee an informed, participatory and, above all, sanitary safe plebiscite on October 25, regardless of the pandemic state in the country ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] Santiago reopened its parks with a virtual reserve and nine prohibitions. People can enter Parque O'Higgins, Quinta Normal and Cerro Santa Lucía, but they will not be able to attend by bicycle, smoke or bring food ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] More than 500 companies are participating in CyberDay that will held until Wednesday, September 2. The Santiago Chamber of Commerce (CCS) said that this opportunity it is expected to help mainly SMEs affected by the pandemic ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Seven Chileans municipalities went to the Preparation stage, in which the quarantine is ended and residents can move freely all week and hold more numerous social gatherings ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Health Ministry authorized the gastronomic sector of some municipalities of Santiago and other cities of the country, to open its premises and terraces from this week, after months of closure as a result of COVID-19 ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] The Health Ministry reduced the restrictions for adults over 75 years of age, who will be subject to the same freedoms as anyone, according to the phase of the Step-by-Step Plan in which their city is located ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] Although commerce and tourism have begun to resume activity amid restrictions due to the pandemic, a part of these industries is still deeply affected in its operation, or even stopped ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] According to Bain & Company, 39% of Chileans acquired the habit of buying online during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 55% of those surveyed started using WhatsApp to buy or increased the use this app last months ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] According to data from the Sociedad de Fomento Fabril, manufacturing production fell 4.2% in July, compared to the same period in 2019, but manufacturing sales growth annual 0.9% ([Source](#)).



STATS: 607,938 cases of COVID-19, 19,364 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Duque issued Decree 1168, which established the transition from compulsory isolation to selective isolation. The decree eliminates many of the movement restrictions that had been imposed by the National government, including those on tourist travel within the country. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] In Bogota, the “New Normal” program lifts many restrictions. Restaurants will operate from Thursday to Sunday, schools remain virtual-only through September, alternate day shopping based on ID number will continue, and public transport will operate with a maximum capacity of 50%. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to María Fernanda Quiñones, President of the Colombian Chamber of Electronic Commerce, e-commerce in Colombia increased sales in the current public health crisis. During the contingency, e-commerce sales have grown an average of 11% per week. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The government maintains some restriction: International borders remain closed; events of more than 50 people are prohibited; alcohol consumption in bars, discos, and public areas is prohibited; all employers should maximize telework; biosafety protocols remain in place. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] This week, the gastronomic sector began the gradual economic opening in Medellin. More than 6000 restaurants will open their doors again after five months closed. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Ministry began the development of phase II of the process of exclusion of services and technologies in health called the technical-scientific analysis. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The National Department of Statistics (DANE) reported that during July 4.15 million people lost their jobs compared to July 2019. It placed the unemployment rate at 20.2%, 9.5 percentage points more than July 2019, when the index was 10.7%. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Government and the ICT Ministry announced the InspiraTIC initiative, which seeks to offer entrepreneurs the possibility of free access to workshops, competitions, consultancies, and videoconferences of 70 national and international experts. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] In June 2020, 58.3% of all commercial, manufacturing, service, and construction companies presented normal operation; 34.4% operated partially, and 7.3% registered temporary closure. ([Source](#))



STATS: 113,767 cases of COVID-19, 6,556 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Lenin Moreno announced the inclusion of 500,000 new beneficiaries of the human development bond. In addition, he affirmed that 44 thousand families with children from 1 to 3 years old, will receive a food voucher to combat child malnutrition. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Military, police, and metropolitan agents are carrying out security controls in the Historic Center of Quito. The objective is to reinforce anti-crime, smuggling, weapons, public space, and mobility controls. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] For the first time, Ecuador will have a virtual fair focused 100% on agrobusiness. The Virtual Field Days Ecuador 2020 will be an event focused on the livestock sector with the aim of sharing knowledge and experience and it will take place from September 2 to 5. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] According to the Minister of Government Maria Paula Romo, Ecuador will not declare a new state of exception due to the pandemic. Exceptional measures such as the curfew or restrictions on the right of free association will end when the current state of exception ends on September 12 or 13. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Association of Craft Brewers of Ecuador; the Ecuadorian Network of Shopkeepers; the Association of Bars, Restaurants and Tourist Entertainment of the Historic Center of Cuenca; and the Pichincha Restaurant Association (Agrepi) are asking for a safe economic reactivation. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Ecuador's Assembly approved the Organic Code of Health that includes the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes, emergency abortion, and assisted reproduction. Consequently, the Catholic Church and pro-life groups ask for a partial veto of the Code. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The technical team of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Government developed an agreement for USD 6.5 billion between 2020 and 2022 for Ecuador. The resources will be provided for the implementation of a program of economic goals known as the Expanded Service of the IMF (SAF). ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) presented the data on information and communication technologies 2019. The figures show that in the country there is still inequality in access to technological resources and services. In 2019, the percentage of households with Internet access was 45.5%. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Despite high unemployment figures, 242,353 new contracts were signed from January to August 20, according to the Labor Ministry. The three activities that added the most new workers are agriculture (includes livestock, forestry, and fishing), commerce, and manufacturing industries. ([Source](#))



STATS: 595,841 cases of COVID-19, 64,158 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) confirmed that the country is in a deep economic crisis; however, he assured that the economic recovery “will be fast” according to the latest data. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Night clubs and bars will reopen in Acapulco, Guerrero, under 50% capacity with the mandatory use of face masks, hand washing and social distancing. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Mexican bank Afirme, which has 500 offices and 4,600 ATMs nationwide, is developing a mobile app to fully digitize 80% of its clients by 2021. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The total number of tourists visiting Mexico decreased 58% from January to July of 2020 compared to the previous year. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Beer sales in Mexico experienced a 7% drop as restaurants, bars and entertainment establishments had to shut down due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Dr. Constantino López-Macías, member of the *IMSS Siglo XXI* Medical Center, confirmed the first case of a COVID-19 reinfection in Mexico with a patient that does not present any symptoms. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to the Minister of Treasury and Public Credit, Arturo Herrera, Mexico will experience the worst crisis since 1932, calling it “the worst economic moment for the country in the last century”. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Mexico-Toluca Interurban Train, which is expected to be completed by 2023, will have 30 high-tech trains that will reach a speed of up to 160 km. per hour ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to a PwC report, if the United States manufacturers decided to move their production from China to Mexico they could reduce operating costs by 23%. ([Source](#))



STATS: 17,662 cases of COVID-19, 326 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] By Decree, the Executive Branch announced the extension until September 6th of the quarantine's phase N° 4 for all the Paraguayan territory, except from the jurisdictions of Asunción, Central and Alto Paraná. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] By Decree, the National Executive officialized the retrocession to quarantine's phase N° 3 for some cities in the department Alto Paraguay. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Looking forward to reducing the environmental impact of paper, and deepening the social distancing measures implemented, businesses will have free access to digital invoices from now on. This was approved by the Taxation Undersecretary. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The measures that were established for the departments of Asunción and Central, which initiated the social quarantine period, and the specific measures declared for the department of Alto Paraná, were extended until September 6th. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The recently appointed Minister of Agriculture announced the strengthening of all the current programs to support the local rural producers, looking forward to boost production. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The National Direction of Sanitary Surveillance approved the use of Remdesivir for treating patients with COVID-19. The Direction will issue certificates for the companies interested in using this drug. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The bill that establishes the National General Budget for 2021 will be formally filed at the Congress this week, by the Ministry of Finances. It declares a 0% increase in the expenses afforded by the Government. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The new Minister of Agriculture, expressed that his work will be mainly focused on the technological development of the agricultural production. His objective is to create the necessary conditions for the producers to have access to technology. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Minister of Finances announced a new edition of The Program Pytyvõ 2.0, which will reach the sectors most affected by the crisis, such as the manufacturing industries, and informal workers. ([Source](#))



STATS: 647,166 cases of COVID-19, 28,778 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government extended the state of health emergency in the country for 90 days. According to the norm, the extension will be counted from September 8 and will last until December 7 of this year. ([Source](#))



LOCAL [MEASURES] The Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) approved the list of 125 provincial municipalities of the country to which 5 million 332 thousand face protection masks will be delivered. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Some 100,000 micro and small businesses will benefit from the first e-commerce accelerator in the framework of the Buy from Peru campaign, indicated the Peruvian Chamber of Electronic Commerce (Capece). ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The head of the National Office of Electoral Processes (ONPE), Piero Corvetto, proposed a vote with staggered hours for elections 2021, to avoid crowds and contagion of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Minagri), through Agro Rural, continues to develop the Minagri Markets "From the farm to the pot" in various regions of the country. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The National Superintendence of Health reported that it had initiated an inspection process in public hospitals to ensure that patients or their families do not have out-of-pocket expenses. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) authorized the transfer of 78 million 318,533 soles in favor of the Urban Transportation Authority for Lima and Callao (ATU) to finance the exceptional granting of a monetary economic subsidy in favor of the regular transportation of people from Lima and Callao. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Superintendence of Public Registries (Sunarp) ordered the electronic filing through the Digital Intermediation System of the notarial parts, certified copies, or signed official documents with the digital signature to facilitate and expand online procedures. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Association of Exporters (ADEX) calls on the Government to jointly study strategies that allow companies to regain productivity, especially in the textile, clothing, and fashion sector, which has one of the most extensive and largest production chains opportunities to create lasting jobs. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1.585 cases of COVID-19, 44 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The government presented the main guidelines of the Budget bill that it will send to Parliament this Monday 31st. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] In addition to the measure of reopening the border for citizens of the European Union in the short term, authorities are studying enabling in the summer season, the entry of tourists from the region. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Municipality of Montevideo launched a data platform that allows knowing the behavior of tourists during their stay in the country. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Covid-19 cases fell to 161 across the country, after 11 days with no new outbreaks. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] President Lacalle Pou will sign in the next few hours the decree on food labeling that had been postponed by the government months ago. The new regulations will come into force and be audited from February 2021. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Authorities of the Ministry of Health highlighted that, despite a slight increase in the number of cases, no new outbreaks have been registered in recent days. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) approved a new extension for applications for unemployment insurance. It includes the dependent workers of the companies that started the process between June 1 and July 31, 2020. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Almost half of the users who downloaded the Coronavirus UY app have already deleted it. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Industrial Fund continues to carry out its policy of promoting technological change. ([Source](#))