

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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STATS: 478,792 cases of COVID-19, 9,912 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Alberto Fernández officially launched the Government's post pandemic agenda. Its axis will be the development of public infrastructure at a federal level, the promotion of investments, and the reactivation of the internal market, among others. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires launched the plan Provincia en Marcha, by which the Government aims to give an integral protection to the provincial productive sector. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The ICT Commission of the Chamber of Representatives met with several specialists of the sector to analyze the current regulatory framework of digital platforms, looking forward to develop an open internet, available for all. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Congress approved the Law that helps the touristic sector for 180 days. This initiative extends the Plan of Assistance to Work and Production, and sets other fiscal and economic benefits for the sector. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to a report released by INDEC, the prices of essential alimentary products tripled the general inflation level, since the pandemic started. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Health Ministry launched the Program SUMAR, by which health coverage will be provided to people over 64 years old, with no health insurance. Moreover, this programs broadens the benefits and services of the public health system. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Authorities of the Ministry of Economy are currently working on the last details of the 2021 budget bill, which will be filed at the Congress before September 15<sup>th</sup>. Minister Martín Guzmán expressed that a primary fiscal deficit of 4,5% of the GDP is estimated for the upcoming year. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Minister of Productive Development launched the Plan 4.0, by which the national productive sector will receive financial, fiscal and technical assistance to incorporate technology to their productive processes. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to INDEC, the industrial production increased 2.1% during July. However, it shows an interannual fall of 6.9%, compared to last year. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 4.147.697 cases of COVID-19, 127.004 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** In October, the federal government will release 370 million reais for municipalities across the country and for the Federal District to track and monitor Covid-19 cases. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro approved a bill that extends the state of public calamity until the end of the year due to the covid-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** In some Latin American countries, the coronavirus pandemic has done what campaigns and initiatives have failed for years: millions of people to open their first bank account. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The update of the epidemiological scenario in Brazil, presented on Wednesday (2/9) by the Ministry of Health, showed a drop of 11% in the average of deaths by Covid-19 registered in the country. Falling from 7,018 deaths recorded from 16 to 22 August to 6,212 deaths recorded between 23 to 29 August. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Faced with pressure from President Jair Bolsonaro to cut food prices, the National Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil (CNA) claims that the increase is due to the high production cost generated by the new coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** According to the Department of Chronic Conditions and Sexually Transmitted Infections, of the Ministry of Health, states have reported that, due to the overload of services due to the conoravirus pandemic, there has been a significant reduction in preventive actions, including testing for HIV. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell 9.7% in the second quarter of 2020, compared to the previous three months, the worst result in history due to the covid-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** With funding from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovations, a serological kit for detecting coronavirus developed by UFMG CT Vaccines in partnership with researchers from Fiocruz, will undergo the last phase of testing before approval by Anvisa. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** IBGE research points that in July, industrial production grew 8.0% compared to June 2020, with three consecutive months of growth. ([Source](#))



STATS: 120,241 cases of COVID-19, 5,398 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Bolivian government filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague on Friday against former President Evo Morales due to recent anti-government protests by his followers, which caused the death of several patients in hospitals. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Santa Cruz opened the cinemas after almost six months of inactivity, implementing strict biosecurity measures. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The state-owned National Telecommunications Company (Entel) announced that the cost of the internet would reduce up to five times a gigabyte, and the speed of the service would automatically increase by up to 35%. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Bolivia is one of the two countries in the region where more doctors died from COVID-19. According to experts and physicians, it is due to the lack of biosafety supplies for the protection of professionals who are on the front line in the fight against the virus. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** In August, inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages was 1.78%. This increase is mainly due to roadblocks. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Federation of Municipal Associations of Bolivia (FAM-Bolivia) contacted Russian authorities to purchase medicines for the treatment of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The private sector believes that it is essential to guarantee liquidity to the financial system and comprehensive policy to underpin the purchases of national production, intending to reactivate the economy. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Pacific international fiber-optic network connection was inaugurated in Bolivia. The manager of the state-run National Telecommunications Company (Entel), Eddy Luis Franco, announced the reduction in service costs, hoping that the rest of the operators will do the same. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Entrepreneurs mentioned the delay in regulation and financing problems in the economic reactivation measures launched by the Government. The manager of the National Chamber of Commerce, Gustavo Jáuregui, pointed out that the reaction was slow, and the measures were not effective in their application. ([Source](#))





STATS: 424,274 cases of COVID-19, 11,652 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government announced that it will extend the State of Catastrophe currently in force due to the COVID-19 pandemic until September 25. The measure was decreed on March 18 and has been renewed every 90 days ([Source](#)).



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** After almost six months of quarantine, the bars and restaurants in the municipalities of Providencia, Ñuñoa, Las Condes, Vitacura and San José de Maipo, began to function again. Only these 5 communes of the Metropolitan Region are in phase 3 of the Step by Step plan ([Source](#)).



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** CyberDay 2020 broke records and doubled the sales of 2019. During the three days of the e-commerce event, more than 200 million visits and four million transactions were registered that reached US\$ 368 million ([Source](#)).



**[COVID RELATED]** The Government will grant a special permit so that Chileans can celebrate the National Holidays. The measure will allow gatherings of up to 5 people in closed places and 10 people in open places, and will exclude cities that are currently in quarantine ([Source](#)).



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Health and agriculture authorities visited the most important food market in Santiago, La Vega Central, to verify the supply chain and provide a self-care guide for merchants and consumers with health protocols of the Step by Step plan ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** The Health Ministry reported that six months after the first case of COVID-19 in the country, last march, 93% of the patients have recovered. Today 15,670 cases are still active in Chile ([Source](#)).



**[ECONOMY]** Congress passed the bill that improves the Employment Protection Law and increases the amount of benefits provided by the Unemployment Insurance. With this reform, around 2 million people will have access to Unemployment Insurance and 3 million to solidarity financing ([Source](#)).



**[TECHNOLOGY]** During the eighth version of Summit País Digital, which was held for virtually, the Science and Technology Minister highlighted that research and innovation have played a key role in the pandemic, with the development of tests and mechanical respirators ([Source](#)).



**[MANUFACTURING]** The manufacturing industry fell 7.2 points in July, a lower number than those registered in May and June, with -13.7 and -8.4%, respectively, according to the INE. The fall was due to the year-on-year decrease of 5.9% in the manufacture of food products, among other indicators ([Source](#)).



**STATS:** 666,521 cases of COVID-19, 21,412 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Iván Duque did not accept the resignation of the Minister of Interior, Alicia Arango. It was leaked that she intended to resign from her position to return to the diplomatic mission of Colombia in Geneva. However, President Duque managed to convince her to continue in office. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** In Bogotá, schools, kindergartens, and private universities will be able to apply for the gradual reopening. It must be agreed with parents, students, and teachers. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** During the Andicom 2020 Congress, a Digital Pact was proposed for the economic and social reactivation. It includes five key pillars to advance in the digitization of the society, ensuring that it is an inclusive process where all Colombians can take advantage of the benefits of an increasingly connected world. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** President Iván Duque said that, so far, no case of reinfection has been verified in Colombia. According to Duque, some cases in the world are under study, not only by health authorities in other countries but also under the strict surveillance of the World Health Organization. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Bogotá reopened restaurants on September 3. However, according to Fenalco Bogotá, sales of the restaurants remain in negative percentages. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Health Providing Institutions (IPS) and the Health Promoting Entities (EPS) called on citizens to resume health services, including ongoing treatments and procedures that were postponed due to the pandemic, while doing a call to maintain self-care practices at home and other spaces. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Finance Minister Alberto Carrasquilla affirmed that, for the remainder of the year and 2021, the economic reactivation plan would prioritize spending in the sectors that have the highest multipliers of public investment and that have great generation potential of employment. For example, construction and infrastructure. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** On September 11, the ICT Ministry will respond in real-time all the questions from Colombians related to the uses of the Internet, technology, and the wide offer that the Ministry has for Colombian families in all regions. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Trade Minister José Manuel Restrepo announced that they are advancing in the 'nearshoring' strategy. This project is aimed at multinationals seeking a new organization of their supply chains by relocating to countries that provide guarantees to do so. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 118,045 cases of COVID-19, 6,724 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Lenín Moreno signed Decree 1137 to collect advance taxes from large taxpayers. The document provides that the money will go to meet health expenses due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** In Quito, the COVID-19 contagion curve continues to rise. On August 31st, 298 of 371 health beds were occupied. Similarly, only 3 of the 134 intensive care beds were free. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to Leonardo Ottati, president of the Chamber of Electronic Commerce, the pandemic generated an increase in electronic transactions by more than 200%; by the end of 2020, it would cause turnover of more than \$ 2 billion USD. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The National Institute for Public Health Research (INSPI) has decreased the number of tests to detect the coronavirus. Diagnosis tests were fewer in August (86,676) than in July (95,041). Additionally, the lower number of tests has generated a lower number of infected people in the record. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** In September, the capacity in restaurants and shopping centers in Quito increased to a 50%. The state of exception will end, and a new stage will begin where self-regulation will be a determining pillar. This is why the National Government presented the campaign “Yo Me Cuido”. The initiative aims to raise public awareness for care and prevention of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health is expanding the country's international relations to face the pandemic. The Ministry had an approach with experts from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain to consolidate agreements on actions to face new threats in terms of pandemics. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** President Lenín Moreno assured that the Humanitarian Law saved more than 56,000 jobs in the country and allowed the creation of thousands of jobs. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** According to Andrés Bedón, the National Director of Technologies for Education, 45.5% of families have Internet access in their homes, but only 21.6% have Internet access in rural areas. Therefore, he states that it is necessary to strengthen the educational model through the media, with national coverage of 93%. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** A study prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) identified the wholesale and retail trade; social and personal community activities; hotels and restaurants; real estate, business, and rental activities; and manufacturing as the sectors most affected by the pandemic. ([Source](#))





STATS: 634,023 cases of COVID-19, 67,558 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) suggested that political parties should cut their budget by 50% to use the money on the Health Emergency and the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mexico City's government will begin to search bars and nightclubs after detecting that some of these have begun operating, even though it is not allowed yet by Health authorities. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to BlackSip there was a 500% increase in e-commerce in Mexico, making it a fundamental pillar in the "new normality". ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** A COVID-19 vaccine created by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) could be ready by mid-year 2021. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Employers' Confederation of Mexico (Coparmex) warned that if Congress approves the law to prohibit minors from consuming beverages and foods with high caloric content 300,000 jobs will be lost. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** According to a report by Amnesty International, Mexico is the country in which the most health personnel, at least 1,320, have died from COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Inflation in Mexico has remained one of the highest among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with 3.6%, compared to Colombia with 2% and Brazil with 2.3%. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** In the Medical Center *20 de Noviembre*, a robot with Artificial Intelligence called *La Luchy Robotina* was incorporated for the psychological care of patients with COVID-19, the first of its kind in LATAM. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Mexican Association of Automotive Distributors (AMDA) forecasts that 28% less cars will be sold in Mexico in 2020 compared to last year. ([Source](#))





**STATS:** 22, 486 cases of COVID-22, 435 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** By Decree, President Mario Abdo extended Phase N° 4 sanitary measures for the whole Paraguayan territory – except from Asunción, Central, Alto Paraná and some jurisdictions of the Chaco Paraguayo- , until September 20th. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Executive Power officialized the extension of the strictest quarantine phase for the Department of Alto Paraná, until September 20<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, the regions of Asunción and Central continue in quarantine's phase N° 3. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** [DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Ministry of Industry and Commerce announced a package of initiatives for SMES, by which these will be guaranteed access to digital payment methods. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Government authorized the resumption of commercial flights under a strict protocol, exclusively for connections with Uruguay. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to the Central Bank, August's inflation was of 0.5%. The items which registered the greatest price increase were alimentary products, durable goods, and health services. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Executive Power authorized the Health Ministry to coordinate plans and actions with the private health sector. Because of this authorization, the Ministry was enabled to sign agreements with laboratories, clinics and hospitals, to perform the medical treatments required. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Minister of Economy Benigno López denied that the 2021 budget bill may include a tax increase. On the contrary, López explained that the Executive Power's intention is to obtain external financial aid for 600 million dollars. The bill, sets clear budget adjustment goals for the public sector. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** A new cycle of free trainings was launched by the Government through the digital platform CursosPy, to foster the incorporation of people to the labor market. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Representatives of the Paraguayan Industrial Union requested public policies to protect the national industry, to boost the job generation and optimize production and exportation. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 689,977 cases of COVID-19, 29,838 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) launched the communication campaign “The COVID does not kill alone. Let's not be accomplices”, which seeks to generate an impact on citizens through harsh and direct messages, to produce a change in behavior in the population. ([Source](#))



**LOCAL [MEASURES]** The Ministry of Health (Minsa) installed 17 rapid temporary care centers (CRAT) in nine districts of the northern area of Lima for the timely disposal and care of COVID-19 cases. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Central of Public Purchases (Peru Purchasing) initiated the call for the selection of suppliers that will be incorporated into eight Electronic Catalogs so that they can sell their products to the State. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Health Ministry (Minsa) reported that in the next few days an agreement will be signed with the Gamaleya Institute of Russia to facilitate the purchase of the Sputnik V vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Ministry of Agriculture (Minagri) signed a framework agreement for inter-institutional cooperation to increase the productivity of the cultivation of hard yellow corn on the farms of Family Farming producers in the regions of La Libertad, Áncash and Lima. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Health Ministry (Minsa) plans to immunize 20 million Peruvians free of charge, all of legal age, during the first year that vaccination begins in the countries. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** On Monday, September 7, the Congress concluded the interpellation of the head of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), María Antonieta Alva. The minister answered 82 questions presented by the National Parliament regarding the measures taken by this portfolio to face the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Health (Minsa) approved the technical document that guides Peruvian researchers on the parameters that molecular tests for COVID-19 discard must meet. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Analysts at the FocusEconomics Consensus Forecast LatinFocus revised their growth forecast for Peruvian manufacturing upwards in August from 2021 to 2023, which would be higher than the average for Latin America. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1.679 cases of COVID-19, 45 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Ministry of Economy defended the Budget against criticism from the opposition for cuts in some areas. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]**. The Ministry of Tourism announced that the government will wait until the end of October to decide on the opening of the borders that allows the entry of foreign tourists, especially those who come by land, such as Argentines and Brazilians. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Two Uruguayan doctors developed an app to leave COVID-19 out of doors.

The 5vid tool is based on the control of symptoms prior to admission to work, institutions or businesses; the MSP is studying declaring it of ministerial interest. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** Currently there are 175 people who are suffering from the disease, with no new outbreaks having been reported in the last 15 days. [\(Source\)](#)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The global dairy price index fell for the fourth time in a row. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** Uruguay and Brazil signed an agreement to jointly monitor COVID-19 on the borders of Quaraí Artigas, Quaraí Bella Unión. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** Exports fell again in August, this time by 18.3%, compared to the same month last year. This implies the eighth consecutive drop in exports in the year, while in the January-August period the drop is 17% compared to the same period of 2019. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Public Health approved a new technique to detect COVID-19 in 45 minutes, which will be available in 30 days to be used. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** Representatives of different chambers of the region spoke about the impact of the pandemic on the industrial business, the challenges for manufacturing in this new scenario. [\(Source\)](#)