

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 631,365 cases of COVID-19, 13,053 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Executive formally filed the 2021 budget bill at the Congress which, among other economic variables, estimates a recovery of 5.5% of the GDP for next year. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Government of the City of Buenos continues its flexibilization process, and authorized the resumption of several activities, such as private construction, medical consulting in clinics, and gastronomy. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Argentinian Chamber of E Commerce launched the fourth edition of the event E Commerce Go, which intends to generate a space for the training of companies to improve their skills on e-commerce. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] By Decree, the National Executive Power extended until October 11th the mandatory and preventive social isolation for the AMBA region, and the other areas of the country with high contagiousness indices. The rest of the country remains on a social distancing phase. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Senate is currently considering existing initiatives to regulate the front labelling of alimentary products, which contain high levels of nutrients, that may be harmful for health. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] According to the National Statistics Institute (INDEC) the pharmaceutical industry increased its inter-annual turnover by 59.4% in the first half of the year. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Seeking to reduce the demand of foreign currencies, the Central Bank and AFIP launched several restrictive measures. Among these, expenses in dollars through credit cards, will be considered part of the US\$200 quota while companies will be permitted access to only 40% of their necessities in dollars, to pay their debts. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] By Decree, the National Executive Power extended until December 31st, the Resolution that establishes a prohibition against cutting off the essential services of water, electricity, gas, and internet, among others, which now applies for users with up to seven unpaid bills. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to a report published by the Argentinian Confederation of SMES, the use of the installed industrial capacity was of 62,6% in August, registering the fourth consecutive month of recovery ([Source](#))



STATS: 4.547.150 cases of COVID-19, 136.997 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jair Bolsonaro authorized the inclusion of a new social program in the 2021 budget after vetoing the previous day. The budget proposal's rapporteur, Senator Márcio Bittar, is responsible to create a new program format that does not hit the spending ceiling. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The governor of São Paulo, João Doria (PSDB), authorized the resumption of classes on October 7 for public and private high school students. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The pandemic stimulated the creation of a series of products and services, that created new niche markets for companies and startups with solutions aimed at fighting the coronavirus. Most do not believe that the vaccine against the disease will make the business unfeasible. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The state of São Paulo will receive the first 5 million Coronavac's doses of October and build a factory to produce the Chinese vaccine in 2021. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The 3.3% rise in food prices impacts the increase in inflation. Wholesale food prices rose 15.02% in 12 months through August. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] In the future, there may be a mental health pandemic. Research carried out by a consultancy indicates that 73% of the 400 Brazilians interviewed were emotionally impacted by social isolation. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Brazil's central bank kept the basic interest rate (Selic) at 2% per year. The Monetary Policy Committee did not signal the end of the interest rate cuts and that it is not intended to raise the rate over the next year. The Selic is the key interest rate of the Brazilian economy and serves as a reference for other interest rates. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Technology and logistics will leverage job creation in the post-pandemic. With home office on the rise and e-commerce advancement, the job market should open more space for system developers and specialists in logistics 4.0 ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Industrial idleness reached a record level during the pandemic period. Industrial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ended the period 15.4% below its productive capacity, according to a study by FGV. ([Source](#))



STATS: 130,676 cases of COVID-19, 7,617 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jeanine Añez resigned her presidential candidacy this Thursday with a call for the unity of Bolivians in order to avoid an advantage for the MAS party in the general elections of October 18. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The rain helped the Noel Kempff Mercado National Park, after 20 days of fires in Santa Cruz, so far the fire has affected more than 6,000 hectares. The Santa Cruz Government proposes strategies to fight the fire. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] In the Virtual Business Roundtable between the National Chamber of Commerce of Bolivia and ProChile, more than 100 companies participated, from both countries, from (Fintech), Health Technology (Healthtech), Educational Technology sectors, (Edutech), and Logistics & Retail. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] In Bolivia, the COVID-19 recovery rate rises to 68 percent. In the first weeks of August, the country had a 36 percent recovery rate, but as of September 12, there was a substantial change to 66 percent, very close to the world average. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Chamber of Gastronomic Entrepreneurs of La Paz rejected the new regulation on business promotions, which determines to include as business promotion activities various reactivation actions that companies are carrying out as an alternative to survive in the current situation. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Ministry plans to strengthen Health Communication as an awareness component for Active Community Surveillance. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) announced to the Government that the resources provided to the Bolivian State were not for other fines that were not in the loan contracts. The organizations do not approve of the use of their resources for the Bond Against Hunger. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Foreign Ministry reported that 2,013 micro, small, and medium-sized companies entered the digital age in a single month, within the framework of a plan supported by the Organization of American States. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] More than 2,000 micro, small, and medium-sized companies benefit from commercial promotion web pages. ([Source](#))



STATS: 447,468 cases of COVID-19, 12,298 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The government granted powers to the health authority to enter the houses in order to monitor compliance with the measures provided for the National Holidays, and which allowed meetings with a maximum of people for open and closed spaces, among other measures ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] The National Zoo, located in the Metropolitan Park, will reopen its doors on September 29 with a series of demanding sanitary measures aimed at caring for local fauna and the visitors. The entry will be made by reservation of day and time ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The biggest supermarkets in Chile registered an increase in its online sales in the context of National Holidays, compared to the same month of 2019. The best-selling products have been meats, sausages and others related to the celebration ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] The Covid Fund for US\$12,000 million, created to help companies overcome the crisis caused by the pandemic, will not be able to transfer resources to companies sanctioned for collusion or to those that have companies in tax havens ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Despite COVID-19, the consumption of food and beverages increased considerably in homes as a result of the National Holidays. Although it was thought that the sale of meat would be lower than 2019, the demand in the butcher shops did not decrease ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] The Catholic University of Chile reported that in the coming weeks they will begin clinical trials of the COVID-19 vaccine that its are developing with the Sinovac laboratory. The vaccine will be tested in 3,000 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 60 ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] The National Institute of Statistics (INE) reported that in July 53.4% of the companies that availed themselves of the Employment Protection Law, promulgated due to the pandemic, plan to lay off workers in the next three months ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] A Randstad survey of more than 400 companies from different sectors in Chile revealed that 75% of the surveyed will continue with the home office mode, either a few days a week or completely, when the pandemic is overcome ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] Sofofa (Sociedad de Fomento Fabril in spanish) presented a guide that seeks to promote the safe return of workers to companies, considering the risks of contagion of COVID-19, the type of company and group of employees ([Source](#)).



STATS: 770,435 cases of COVID-19, 24,397 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Iván Duque appointed Wilson Ruiz Orejuela as the new Minister of Justice. Wilson Ruiz was a former magistrate of the Superior Council of Judicature. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Mayor of Bogotá, Claudia López, announced that there would no longer be a restriction of "pico y cédula" in order to contribute towards the economic reactivation. Besides, sectors such as retail trade will be able to operate every day of the week with differential hours. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Financial Superintendency structured a pilot project to promote a test space between the digital ecosystem and the National Government in the matter of cryptocurrency through a FinTech regulatory sandbox. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Health Ministry issued Decree 1258 of 2020, which creates a Coordination and Advisory Board to analyze and recommend the strategies and mechanisms that the ministry should adopt to access to safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Mayor of Bogotá Claudia López announced that restaurants would be able to open every day with biosafety protocols. Previously, they only opened between Wednesday and Sunday at certain times. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] INVIMA confirmed that phase 3 of the clinical trial of a vaccine against COVID-19 would begin on September 21. According to INVIMA, ten research centers will start the clinical trials in Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Bogotá, Floridablanca, and Medellín. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Mauricio Santamaría, president of the National Association of Financial Institutions (ANIF), and Luis Fernando Mejía, director of Fedesarrollo, agreed that the country must carry out a tax reform to collect around 20 billion COP. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Congress is ready to discuss the new bill, presented by the Labor Ministry, which regulates the contribution to the social security of workers of technological platforms. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Inexmoda will focus its efforts on programs that help with the economic reactivation. Their strategic plan aims to strengthen the business and industrial fabric, making Colombian design visible in international markets. ([Source](#))



STATS: 126,711 cases of COVID-19, 11,095 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Lenin Moreno ordered Vice President María Alejandra Muñoz to travel to the affected areas of the ashfall by the Sangay volcano. Also, the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Xavier Lazo, went to the areas to solve the difficulties that have been generated in agricultural and livestock production. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Quito authorities are reinforcing the control operations to avoid COVID-19 contagion risks. The risk has not decreased and there is a false perception due to the end of the state of emergency. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] General Director of Perspectiva Francisco Briones, a consultancy for economic and business affairs, affirmed that the digital government is the solution to the fiscal crisis in Ecuador. He mentioned that many daily tasks do not require the physical presence of people. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] In an interview, Chancellor Luis Gallegos said that the COVID-19 vaccine should be a universal good, available to everyone at reasonable prices. He stated that Ecuador joined the initiative to produce 250 million vaccines with the Slim Foundation. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Motels, restaurants, and other sectors gradually return their 24-hour commercial activities in Quito. Establishments can provide their service if they comply with the legal requirements for operation and biosafety protocols. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Despite the Government is making openings and giving responsibilities to local governments, Health Minister Juan Carlos Zevallos stated that the health emergency continues, and the preventive measures are still in force. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Ecuador achieved a new debt restructuring with China. Ecuador obtained an additional USD 474 million for 2020 and 2021 and will not have to make payments for the next 12 months. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Space technology would allow local production of respirators that do not require electricity. An alliance between several institutions seeks to manufacture a low-cost respirator in Ecuador through a NASA technology transfer initiative. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Government presented the campaign 'Ecuadorian hands that provide the world' on non-oil exports. The campaign seeks to promote the economic and productive reactivation of the export sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 697,663 cases of COVID-19, 73,493 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) reported that there is an initial budget of \$20 billion MXN to buy COVID-19 vaccines, and if needed, more money can be destined for the purchase of the vaccine. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination in Mexico City has received more than 40 complaints for cases of discrimination against elders and pregnant women who have been denied access to businesses. The Council requested these stores to prioritize those who are at risk, not restrain them, and make it easier for them to shop. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The federal government published new austerity guidelines for more than 300 government institutions, which include topics related to the regulation of home office. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] According to Undersecretary of Health, Hugo López-Gatell, Mexico has had 7 consecutive weeks with a decrease in the contagion rate. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Of the 62 restaurants and hotels that are part of the *Asociación Tesoros de México*, a quality certification provided by the Ministry of Tourism, 80% have opened to the public after limiting their services due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Over 5,500 pregnant women have become infected with COVID-19 in Mexico, causing 140 deaths. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to Hector Villareal, director at *Centro de Investigación Económica y Presupuestaria A. C.*, Mexico must grow at a 5% rate for at least ten years straight in order to have a sustainable pension system. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Legislators have presented three initiatives, which include leaving online surveillance to the Army, to stop cybercrimes in Mexico. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to data presented by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) the manufacturing sector is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels in terms of employed personnel, hours worked and increases in wages. ([Source](#))



STATS: 33, 520 cases of COVID-22, 659 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Executive Power officialized the extension of quarantine phase N° 4 until October 4th. This measure will be not be applied to the regions of the country which are currently going through a different quarantine phase. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Executive Power established that, for the regions of Asunción and Central, quarantine's phase N° 3 will be extended until October 4th. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] [DIGITAL ECONOMY] Looking forward to the promotion of e commerce, a bill was filed at the House of Representatives, authorizing the use of the digital signature for electronic transactions. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Due to an agreement signed between Paraguay and Brazil, cross-border trade will be resumed between border cities from both countries. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the alimentary industry was among the few activities whose exports increased during 2020, registering a 24.5% raise. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni publicly analyzed the national epidemiological situation, and formally suggested the Executive Power to extend the quarantine restrictive measures for another two weeks. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] National Minister of Finances, Benigno López, expressed that the will of the Ministry under his charge is to promote foreign investments, by improving the national regulatory framework for business. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Counsel of Science and Technology announced the launching of a system for the epidemiological surveillance of potential COVID-19 cases, through an app. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The National Bank of Promotion received a credit line from an international financial entity, for the financing of SMES, that are part of productive processes related to exportation. ([Source](#))



STATS: 768,895 cases of COVID-19, 31,369 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Congress did not reach the votes to vacate President Martín Vizcarra due to moral incapacity. However, the country remains alert for a possible political crisis that would complicate the health crisis due to COVID-19. ([Source](#))



LOCAL [MEASURES] Mandatory social isolation (quarantine) is maintained in all the provinces of the Cusco, Moquegua, Puno and Tacna regions, and only the displacement of people is allowed for the provision and access to essential services and goods. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The ONPE reported that in the 2021 elections, two pilot projects for remote electronic voting will be implemented for Peruvians abroad and for members of the Armed Forces. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Government made official the supreme decree that lifts the mandatory social immobilization on Sundays, but with some restrictions such as the prohibition of circulation of private vehicles. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Agrobanco made the first disbursements to the small mango producers of the Board of Users of the Lower Hydraulic Sector of Alto Piura - Class B, for an amount of more than 90,000 soles, thanks to the Director Financing Program of the Agroperú Fund. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Peru signed the Agreement of Commitment with the organization World Alliance for Vaccines (GAVI), on behalf of the Mechanism of Global Access to Vaccines against covid-19 (Mechanism Covax Facility), with which it will benefit with more than 13 million of vaccine doses, reported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Central Reserve Bank of Peru (BCRP) reported that as of September 16, a total of 452,573 companies from all economic sectors received loans from Reactiva Perú, of which 98% (442,935) are micro and small companies (mypes) that benefited from historically low interest rates. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] After the auspicious results of the first two calls to subsidize projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which distributed S / 11.5 million to about 50 initiatives, the Concytec launched a third call to finance Special Projects: Modality-Escalation of COVID-19 projects. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The micro and small companies (mypes) of the tourism sector begin to access the credits granted by the Business Support Fund (FAE) Tourism since Monday, September 21.. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1.808 cases of COVID-19, 46 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Government authorities expressed their concern at the finding of unauthorized "massive celebrations" and announced that they will tighten controls and sanctions for this type of social event. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The government is studying the possibility of reducing the mandatory quarantine days for tourists entering Uruguay with negative results of covid-19 diagnostic tests. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Budget law sent to Parliament by the Executive, expresses the vision that guides the deployment of public policies throughout the next five years, hand in hand with the pandemic, accelerated technological change and irruption of the digital economy. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The outbreak of the health institutions in Montevideo, identified in early July, continued its ramification and has become the largest since the start of the health emergency in Uruguay. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]. The municipality of Montevideo announced a tariff adjustment for the first year of work within the new Metropolitan Agri-food Unit (UAM), which has been the subject of controversy in recent days with the national government. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The authorities of the Ministry of Public Health presented the Five-Year Budget Law in Parliament, highlighting the creation of the Agency for the Evaluation, Regulation and Surveillance of Health Technologies. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY]. In the second quarter of the year, the Uruguayan economy contracted 10.6% compared to the same period last year. If compared to the first quarter of 2020, the drop was 9%. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The joint work between the Faculty of Chemistry, Engineering and Architecture to design SARS-CoV-2 sample swabs with TPU, silicone and yarn heads, the result of the development of original university knowledge applied to the solution of specific problems. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Economists from the Chamber of Industries (CIU) and the Chamber of Commerce and Services (CCSU) highlighted the first signs of reactivation of the economy in the last month and underlined the importance of recovering the jobs that existed before the arrival of the virus. ([Source](#))