

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 711,325 cases of COVID-19, 15,749 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] By Decree, the prohibition against dismissals without fair cause, or due to lack of work or mayor force was extended until the end of November. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Tax Agency of the Province of Buenos Aires extended until December 31st the term for SMES to adhere to the Plan for the regularization of their debts, for provincial taxes. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Looking forward to the event called CiberMonday, organized by the the Argentinian Chamber of E Commerce, the Government announced that companies will receive trainings on Consumers Rights. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] In order to ease the economic effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable sectors of the population, the National Executive extended until January 31st the decree that freezes the rental prices. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Representatives of the Chamber of Alimentary Industries expressed that they are currently on a period of conversations with the Ministry of Productive Development, to increase the prices of the products included in the Plan Precios Máximos . ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The National Health Ministry led virtual meetings of the Federal Health Counsel, in order to share the experiences regarding the pandemic, of the sanitary authorities from different regions of the country. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Amid the tension caused by the restrictive measures issued by the Central Bank, and in the middle of a period of conversations with the IMF, for the restructuring of the debt, IMF spokesman Gerry Rice, confirmed that the entity plans to visit Argentina in October, to talk about the economic plans of the country. ([Source](#))




[TECHNOLOGY] The Minister of Productive Development Matías Kulfas, officially launched credit lines for the purchase of electrical appliances, to pay in 36 installments, with an interest rate of 15%,. ([Source](#))




[MANUFACTURING] The Government declared 15 new economic activities as critical and included their industries among the beneficiaries of the new edition of the Plan of Assistance to Work and Production. This edition of the Plan, sets special benefits for those companies who achieve employment goals. ([Source](#))




STATS: 4.745.464 cases of COVID-19, 142.058 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry




[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jair Bolsonaro's speech at the United Nations General Assembly, on Tuesday, addressed fires in the Amazon region, sustainability, combat the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency aid, and increase of foreign investments in Brazil. The discourse was not well accepted by critics, journalists, and congressman, who claim that President Bolsonaro inflated economic, environmental, and commercial data. [\(Source\)](#)




[LOCAL MEASURES] The governor of Rio de Janeiro state, Wilson Witzel, is accused for a crime of liability from the financial deviations during the COVID pandemic. Witzel is already removed from office by decision of the Superior Court of Justice (STJ) and will be tried by a mixed court, formed of deputies of Rio de Janeiro state and judges of the Court of Justice of Rio (TJRJ). [\(Source\)](#)




[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The government should propose a 0.2% tax on financial transactions in the digital environment, according to the government's leader in Congress. The new coronavirus pandemic increased public spending [\(Source\)](#)




[COVID RELATED] The Average of deaths in Rio de Janeiro State increased after agglomeration on the beaches during the national holiday. The UTI occupancy rate is 78% [\(Source\)](#)




[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] After shipment of infected frozen chicken, China detects again coronavirus in frozen Brazilian fish and suspends import. [\(Source\)](#)




[HEALTH] Brazilian Scientists are dedicated to discovering National formulas that protect against Covid-19 infection. After good results in animals, some treatments are prepared for tests with humans. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] Brazilian Central Bank reviews the GDP forecast to a 5% drop in 2020. In June, the monetary authority projected a record fall in economic activity of 6.4%. According to CB, the indicators show the partial resumption of economic activity after the most acute period of the pandemic. The Inflation projection is 2.1% in 2020 driven by the food sector. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] The information technology vacancies increased 63% in the last 12 months, according to the National Employment Bank (BNE) survey. The Covid-19 pandemic heats the IT market in Brazil. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] The confidence of the industry increased in 30 sectors, according to the National Confederation of Industry survey. The industrial entrepreneur confidence index (ICEI) highlights industries of transformation, construction, mining, extraction, transport, and others sectors. [\(Source\)](#)



STATS: 131,453 cases of COVID-19, 7,693 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The low prices of raw material commodities in the international market, such as oil and minerals, caused a decrease in resources. Therefore an imminent cut of the national and subnational budget is envisioned. [Source](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Government is analyzing the possibility of a public-private alliance to carry out the HUB project (international and commercial distribution center) at the Viru Viru airport in the city of Santa Cruz. [Source](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Deputy Ministry of Foreign Trade and Integration promotes the consolidation of Electronic Commerce from the Digitization of MIPYMES in Bolivia, through the Digitization Plan to Foreign Trade. [Source](#)



[COVID RELATED] Avifavir, the Russian medicine to treat COVID-19, arrived at Cochabamba and is marketed at \$ 14. It is going to be share-out with all the departments of Bolivia. Next Monday, the population will be able to find it in the country's pharmacies. [Source](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The departmental head of the National Service of Agricultural Health and Food Safety (Senasag) reported that slaughterhouses in Cochabamba must formalize since only four of them have a registry. [Source](#)



[HEALTH] Sucre Airport officials were evaluated medically due to suspicions of COVID-19 cases. [Source](#)



[ECONOMY] The rating firm Moody's reduced the rating of Bolivia from B1 to B2 due to the reduction in the income of the country, fiscal erosion, etc. On the other hand, it adjusted the country's outlook from negative to stable, mainly due to the country's favorable debt structure. [Source](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] The United States Embassy in Bolivia, through the Talks On The Issues Program, presented the event Designing the future through innovation and new opportunities. [Source](#)



[MANUFACTURING] Business chambers presented on Monday the Business Cluster Made in Bolivia, a business productive development model that seeks to enhance competitiveness through business associations, training services, and the articulation of business networks. [Source](#)



STATS: 457,901 cases of COVID-19, 12,641 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Sebastián Piñera announced the collaboration agreements that the Chilean government is promoting to ensure the obtaining of potential vaccines against COVID-19. These agreements are between universities and prestigious laboratories, including Sinovac, AstraZeneca and CanSino ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] As of this week, only 3% of the Metropolitan Region is in total quarantine. The remaining 97% is in the Transition or Preparation phase of the Step by Step Plan, promoted by the authorities to control the COVID-19 pandemic in the country ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Sales of works of art were reactivated through the online channel, after the fall that the sector suffered in the first months of the year due to the pandemic. Paintings, sculptures and antiques are the most demanded by consumers ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] From this Monday, people will be able to request a special permit to make interregional trips between cities that are in phase 3, 4 or 5 of the Step by Step plan. Trips cannot be made during curfew ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The authorities valued the reopening of restaurants in open spaces, which has allowed thousands of jobs to be recovered. Currently, 45% of the restaurants located in cities in phase 3 of the Step by Step plan remain open to the public ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] According to the Health Ministry, from March to date, organs transplants have fallen by 66%, and donors by 58% compared to the same period in 2019. Today in total, 2,351 people in Chile expect an organ donor ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] More than 35 thousand people have recovered their jobs after 264 private construction projects were resumed in six regions of the country. The initiative includes strict sanitary measures for workers ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] The Chilean company GenoSUR developed Nona Amp, a technology that replaces a critical step in the COVID-19 diagnostic -the extraction of RNA-, accelerating this process and doubling the capacity of each laboratory in the country ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] Desafío Levantemos Chile Foundation and the Nostalgic recycled clothing store created a collection called "Yo Elijo Local", where 100% of the profits will go directly to support small merchants so that they can reopen their businesses ([Source](#)).



STATS: 818,203 cases of COVID-19, 25,641 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Iván Duque announced the appointment of former Montería Mayor Carlos Eduardo Correa Escaf as the new Minister of the Environment. Correa will replace Ricardo Lozano, who had expressed to the president his intention to leave the office due to health issues. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] El Dorado airport set up a COVID-19 test site with the approval of the National Institute of Health and will perform four types of tests. . ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Colombia was among the top 20 markets for shopping applications during the first half of 2020. In Colombia, delivery services were successfully adapted to meet demand during the health emergency and had a growth of about 284 percent compared to 2019. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Health Ministry defined the priority with which it will administer the first batch of vaccines against Covid-19. The Health minister said that the analysis carried out initially seeks to cover a population of 14.3 million people at a higher risk of mortality. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Tolima rice growers will start the last harvest of the year that will begin in September and will last until December, and they hope that this will generate income of more than \$ 1.5 billion. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) indicated in a statement that the first antiviral against COVID-19 registered in Russia would be exported to Colombia, among other countries. The arrival of Afivavir and its distribution would be in October of 2020 ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Economic analysts consulted by the Fedesarrollo Financial Opinion Survey consider that Colombia's GDP will fall between 10 and 7 percent in 2020. This estimate is lower compared to last month, which was 6.7%. It contrasts with those of the National Government since the Finance Minister expects a drop of 5.5% this year. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The ICT Minister, Karen Abudinen and deputy minister of Digital Transformation, Germán Rueda presented the virtual empowerment program Por TIC Mujer. The strategy seeks to promote entrepreneurship, equity, and online safety for women from various regions of the country. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The National Administrative Department of Statistics (Dane) revealed that 62.9% of Commerce, Manufacturing, Services, and Construction companies had a normal operation in July, while 31.3% operated partially, and 5.8% had a temporary shutdown. ([Source](#))



STATS: 134,965 cases of COVID-19, 11,280 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] In the United Nations General Assembly, President Lenin Moreno said that the current health emergency requires cooperation, dialogue, and solidarity. Further, he asked for support to middle-income countries because all nations face serious economic problems. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Quito Mayor, Jorge Yunda, announced measures for tourism reactivation. Between the measures are an 80% diminution on leasing of public space and an expansion of the physical space of businesses. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Secretary-General of the Andean Community, Jorge Hernando Pedraza, highlighted that electronic commerce is a fundamental, necessary and useful tool to boost the economy of the countries of the Andean Community (Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru). ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] On September 22, the cities Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Loja, Santo Domingo, Ambato and Portoviejo represented 52% of COVID-19 infected in Ecuador. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] In Quito, bars and nighttime entertainment centers will remain closed and gyms will begin a pilot plan for reactivation. In contrast, restaurants can operate with 50% of their capacity. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] President Lenin Moreno rejected the Organic Health Code (OHC) approved by Congress. There were some controversial issues about it: (1) care for women with ongoing abortions; (2) assisted human reproduction; (3) access to contraception methods for adolescents; and (4) regulations on the medicinal use of cannabis. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to the analyst, Héctor Delgado, and the Quito Commerce Chamber president, Patricio Alarcón, the frequent tax changes, the lack of incentives, and an outdated Labor Code are the reasons why the country is not attractive for foreign investment. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] According to the Foreign Trade Committee (COMEX), it was settled the elimination of tariffs for technological products in 2019. Due to this and the pandemic, the demand for these assets increased in 2020. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] *Reinventa Ecuador* is an initiative that seeks to promote and reactivate prioritized sectors of the economy such as the manufacturing sector. The program will support initiatives that generate USD5 billion and present solutions for entrepreneurship and innovation. ([Source](#))



STATS: 730,317 cases of COVID-19, 76,430 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) reported that from the one million jobs lost since the beginning of the pandemic, 200,000 of these have been recovered. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Mexico City received the "Tourist Security Stamp 2020" and the "Safe Travels" seal from the World Travel and Tourism Council, which aims to help tourists feel safe and regain trust of the services in the city. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Since the implementation of the Fintech Law in September of 2018, there has been a historical investment of almost \$1.3 billion USD and a growing presence of neobanks, 100% digital financial entities, a trend that has strengthened by the pandemic ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] New measures that will allow users of the financial system affected by the pandemic to restructure their loans, according to what the Ministry of Treasury, and the National Banking and Security Commission presented. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The World Health Organization (WHO) awarded the Ministry of Health for the implementation of the new labeling norm for processed foods and beverages as a progress to fight Non-Communicable Diseases (NDCs). ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Marcelo Ebrard, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that Phase 3 testing for a COVID-19 solution in Mexico will begin on October with different vaccines. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] It is forecasted that 2020 will be the year with the greatest flow of remittances into the country from the US in history; with \$40 billion USD, over 12% more than in 2019. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] According to *EmpleosTI*, the number of US vacancies for technology positions directed for people residing in Mexico has grown 13% this year in comparison to 2019. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Alejandro Magallon, vice president of the Confederation of Industrial Chambers of Mexico (Concamin) said that if a second wave of COVID-19 forces an activity shutdown, the economy would not be able to recover from it, so they would advise a different approach. ([Source](#))



STATS: 39, 432 cases of COVID-22, 818 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Mario Abdo Benítez highlighted the signs of economic recovery which were registered in the Monthly Economic Estimator, and expressed that the National Executive will continue supporting the productive sector. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The National Executive extended until October 4th the restrictive measures displayed for the departments of Caaguazú and Concepción, due to a recommendation of the Health Ministry. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to the Paraguayan Chamber of Payment Methods, digital transactions through e wallets increased 109% interannually, and 75%, when compared to the time before the quarantine. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] President Mario Abdo Benítez manifested that the date for the reopening of the borders with Brazil, will be announced this week. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] According to official figures reported by the Ministry of Agriculture, the agricultural production –that supply the alimentary productive chain- has registered an interannual increase of 17.5% in August, accumulating a positive variation of 18,8% in the second semester of 2020. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Health Ministry released a report which indicates that the speed of the virus spread is slowing down, registering a period for the duplication of cases of 25 days. However, it urged the population to continue complying with the sanitary measures. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to the Central Bank of Paraguay, the Economy dropped 0.9% in the first semester of 2020., registering an interannual loss of 6.5%, during the second trimester. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Counsel of Science and Technology announced the investment of more than a million dollars, in investigation projects, to seek for effective technological solutions against the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to the Central Bank of Paraguay, the exportation of agricultural manufactures registered an increase of the 1.8% in August, reaching the 1.706,8 million dollars. ([Source](#))



STATS: 804,302 cases of COVID-19, 32,262 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Government extended the state of health emergency until October 31. ([Source](#))



LOCAL [MEASURES] Abancay, Huamanga and Huánuco maintain the focused quarantine and therefore, the circulation will be limited to justified causes and specifically, for people who provide essential services. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration (Sunat) will receive virtual applications to postpone or divide debts with the public treasury or Essalud until the end of the year. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Government authorized the transfer of 381 million 326,960 soles for the payment of the Universal Bond of 760 soles in favor of vulnerable families affected in their economy. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] In phase 4 of the economic reactivation, which begins in October, restaurants will expand their capacity to 50%. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Health Minister, Pilar Mazzetti, announced that this week an agreement will be reached on the health protocols for the restart of international travel. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] President Martín Vizcarra announced that phase 4 of the economic reactivation will begin on October 1 partially, without the activities that concentrate people and are high risk. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Government launched the Digital Police Complaint platform, which will allow citizens to carry out this procedure virtually, easily and free of charge. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (Mincetur) announced the creation of a new non-refundable competitive fund for "Turismo Emprende" for 18 million soles, but this time aimed exclusively at artisans and official tourist guides. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2.008 cases of COVID-19, 47 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Authorities of the Executive made a strong call to the population in general, but particularly those of Rivera Department, to maximize controls and care to stop the infections of Covid-19 that have been increasing in the last week. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Presidency does not rule out taking measures against future massive mobilizations after the annoyance generated by the behavior of citizens in the march for Diversity where the protection measures against Covid-19 were violated. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Covid-19, which has already caused more than 20,000,000 infections and almost a million deaths, is also changing the way we handle our money. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Since the health emergency was declared on March 13, 2,008 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 coronavirus have been registered in Uruguay, 1728 have already recovered and 233 are developing the disease. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Government publishes weekly the food prices of a basic basket prepared by the Consumer Price Information System (SIPC) and the Agricultural Market (MAM), with minimums, maximums and averages. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Executive Power ordered that those who enter the country, whether Uruguayans or foreigners, for the election on Sunday 27 must take a second test to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus in case of staying for more than 4 days in the country. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] President Lacalle Pou spoke to the UN and warned that the international community faces one of the most distressing episodes of the time and that the scenario is full of uncertainties and threats. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Researchers and teachers from the departments of Clinical Biochemistry, Biosciences and the Institute Technological of Pando city of the Faculty of Chemistry, developed a new type of test for the detection of SARS-CoV-2. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The pandemic only aggravated the situation in the job market and applications for unemployment insurance soared, reaching more than 300 thousand until June. An encouraging figure: as of May the labor market halted its fall. ([Source](#))