

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 555,537 cases of COVID-19, 11,412 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Executive, is currently defining the last details of the 2021 Budget bill, which will be presented at Congress by Chief of Staff Santiago Cafiero, this week. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Province of Buenos Aires extended the term for the process of restructuring of the debt issued under foreign legislation, until October 9th. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Government incorporated to the national legal system a Resolution issued by the Mercosur, which sets basic standards for the consumers' protection for ecommerce. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Ministry of Productive Development launched a new edition of the Plan of Assistance to Work and Production, for companies affected by the COVID-19 restrictive measures. By this Program, the Government will reimburse the full amount of the credits at subsidized rates given to companies that hire new workers during the upcoming twelve months. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Minister of Productive Development is having regular meetings with the representatives of the Alimentary Industry, to analyze potential price increases, related to variations in the costs of production. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] To strengthen the Health System, The National Executive extended the list of medical supplies an equipment which don't pay import duties. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The House of Representatives called a session for this week, to treat the bill that creates a tax that would reach the wealthiest sector of the country, called Solidary Contribution. Its collection, would be destined to sanitary equipment, SMES, and the development of slums, among others. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Secretary of Internal Commerce relaunched the programs to pay in installments, called Ahora 12 and Ahora 18. These programs include domestic appliances, and other technological gadgets such as computers, their repair services, and establishes a three-month grace period. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to a report published by INDEC, the use of the installed industrial capacity was of 56,8% in July, registering a recovery of 2.1%, compared to the former month. ([Source](#))



STATS: 4.349.544 cases of COVID-19, 132.117 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Brazil is still evaluating whether it will join the international vaccine allocation plan against Covid-19, led by the World Health Organization (WHO) Covax Facility, said the interim Minister of Health, General Eduardo Pazuello. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] This Monday, 14, Brazil resumed testing the vaccine against covid-19 developed by the University of Oxford in partnership with the AstraZeneca laboratory. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Economy Minister Paulo Guedes stressed that all the spending effort the government has been making for the next 10 years is being spent on the new coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The state of São Paulo may decide next week whether or not to return to school on October 7. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] A study carried out by the Food Research Center points out that 52.3% of people - of the 3,000 who were interviewed - do not clean fruits correctly. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The pandemic represented an opportunity for growth for many businesses. The Brazilian Startup Association (Abstartups), informs that 705 were created in Brazil in 2020. In the Federal District, some managed to triple the revenue in the middle of the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Almost 80% of companies increased budget for digital transformation during the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Due to the pandemic, Brazil carried out, between April and June this year, less than half of the organ and tissue transplants at the beginning of the year. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Traditional Brazilian industries have modernized their production with the support of startups during the pandemic. This demand created new opportunities for the technology sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 127,619 cases of COVID-19, 7,394 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government and the Federation of Municipal Associations (FAM-Bolivia) agreed to ask the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) for a loan of Bs 1,400 million for the next municipal elections. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Mayor's Office of Sucre signed an agreement for the supply of the Russian medicine Avifavir. It will reach at least 1,000 patients with COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] A virtual fashion show will be held, for the first time in Bolivia, where an avatar model will present the five best designs of the renowned Bolivian brand Juan de la Paz. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Authorities warned that provinces, where the levels of control have lowered, have a constant exchange with the capital cities, which also puts the health of their inhabitants at risk. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Peru decided to cancel the ban on exports of agricultural products, such as soybeans, chia, and beef, from Bolivia. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Minister launched the Active Community Surveillance Strategy in Pando and delivered medical equipment. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Economy Minister Óscar Ortiz reported that in the first half of this year, the fiscal deficit reached the amount expected for the entire year. Also, he anticipated that in the second semester the situation would continue. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The state telephone company Entel will install, in the coming months, 500 WiFi points in urban and rural municipalities so the inhabitants can access the internet service for free. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Micro and small companies are one of the sectors most affected in Bolivia by the economic crisis. The economic crisis derived from the pandemic has brought with it the closure of more than 30% of the micro and small companies. ([Source](#))



STATS: 437,983 cases of COVID-19, 12,040 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Sebastián Piñera announced that the State of Constitutional Exception for Catastrophe, issued last March as a result of the pandemic, will be extended for 90 more days, at least until December. In any case, the restriction could end before that period depending on the sanitary conditions ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] To reinforce the inspection of the sanitary measures established for the celebration of the National Holidays, the Metropolitan Region of Santiago will have 100 new inspectors. ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The first IT Job Fair was on September 9 and September 10. The online event offered more than a thousand technological jobs. ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Opposition sectors entered a constitutional accusation against former Health Minister Jaime Mañalich for his handling of the pandemic. They accuse him of affecting the life and physical and mental integrity of thousands of Chileans. ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] According to the Trade Association of Supplier Industries, the food and beverage supplier industry experienced a rise in July. The sale of beverages, beers, and spirits grew 21.4% and food increased by 4.4%. ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] Health Ministry reported that the nationwide positivity rate for PCR tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19 decreased from 17% to 6% in the last 90 days. Additionally, daily tests increased from 16,000 to more than 31,000 ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] Labor and Economy Ministries launched 7,000 free and online quotas to train entrepreneurs and workers of small companies, to help them reactivate during the pandemic. ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] Paying the accounts through various digital channels to avoid going to a bank is increasingly common. This modality increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, so companies have had to design much friendlier apps for these processes. ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] During August, US\$160 million in bottled Chilean wine were exported, 9% more than during the same month of 2019, according to the Central Bank. This increase would be related to the reopening of several destination markets that had closed due to the pandemic ([Source](#)).



STATS: 721,892 cases of COVID-19, 23,123 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Defense Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo apologized on behalf of the police for the death of Javier Ordoñez, a lawyer killed by police who pinned him down and repeatedly shocked him with a Taser. His death sparked several nights of protests against police brutality in Bogota, leaving 13 dead and hundreds injured. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Mayor of Bogota Claudia Lopez asked forgiveness for police brutality and called for reconciliation after protests in the city. Claudia Lopez made a call for the police to become a civilian organization rather than a military organization. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] ICT Ministry publishes the Modernization Plan of the Postal sector 2020-2024, which sets the guidelines to generate its transformation in the context of digitization and e-commerce. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] After almost seven months without operating, the international air operation would restart on September 21st. The reactivation of international flights will be gradual and will begin with routes to the United States and some Latin American countries. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Health Ministry issued resolution 1569 of 2020 that establishes the biosafety protocols that restaurants and bars must have for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] According to Legal Medicine, between March 25 and August 18, 868 people suicided, almost six suicides a day. It was filed a bill in Congress to strengthen the Health Ministry through the creation of a specialized office of mental health. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Finance Minister Alberto Carrasquilla said that the economic reactivation plan has already begun, which envisions public spending of COP 24.9 billion and an investment of COP 109.4 billion in the medium and long term. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] According to the Digital Quality of Life Index 2020, which researches the quality of digital wellbeing in 85 countries, Colombia has one of the worst internet accesses in the world (position 83). It analyzes internet affordability, internet quality, electronic infrastructure, electronic government, and electronic security. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) reported that the real production of the Colombian manufacturing industry fell 8.5% in July 2020 compared to the same month of 2019. ([Source](#))



STATS: 118,911 cases of COVID-19, 10,922 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Ecuador ends the State of Exception. However, face-to-face classes in public schools will continue to be suspended, teleworking for vulnerable people will be maintained, and borders and ports will continue to be restricted. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] In Quito, the mega-operations to control citizenship and verify compliance with the restrictions due to the health emergency were expanded. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Regarding the Tax Simplification and Progressivity Law, users of digital platforms will pay VAT from September 16 who do not have tax residences in Ecuador. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Government of Ecuador said it faces problems for the processing of coronavirus samples due to the lack of reagents and the capacity of laboratories. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Due to the end of the State of Exception, restaurants will be able to deliver a "statement of discharge for groups" to their customers that allows them to eliminate the requirement of social distancing. Also, the maximum capacity in restaurants will be 50%. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] In Ecuador, about 20,000 people will be recruited to test the vaccine against COVID-19. The initiative is part of the Solidarity program and will test phase 3 vaccines developed by Oxford and AstraZeneca; Pfizer; Moderna; and vaccines developed in China and Russia. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] President Lenín Moreno affirmed that the external resources that arrive as international support for the country will be used to: Regularize the payment of salaries; pay debts with State providers; guarantee social security; increase the coverage of social assistance programs; and injecting new resources into the credit fund. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Ecuador began to issue the biometric passport, and the digital identification card for citizens, this will help reduce the possibility of identity theft, allow rapid authentication, and provides a universal reading system. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Between January and July 2020, 14 of the 27 export sectors had negative returns compared to the same period in 2019. Among the activities were oil, flowers, clothing, and manufacturing. Meanwhile, bananas, fruits, cocoa, and processed products recorded the highest positive figures. ([Source](#))



STATS: 668,381 cases of COVID-19, 70,821 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) said that unlike Mexico, countries with larger economies were far less successful at controlling the pandemic even when their health infrastructures were supposedly better. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] According to Claudia Sheinbaum, Mexico City's mayor, there could have been 10 times more contagion if testing and contact tracing had not increased. With more than 200,000 tests so far, Mexico City did not follow the national authorities' strategy, and did widespread testing. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The transformation in consumer habits due to the pandemic will drive growth in the fintech sector in Latin America, substituting the traditional banking industry. The Fintech industry sees positively governments' actions laying the foundation for these changes. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] *El Buen Fin*, a yearly weekend with discounts in all stores, will be extended for 2 weeks, from November 9 to 20, to avoid crowds and reactivate the domestic consumption, attempting to reach \$118 billion MXN like in 2019. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Chamber of Commerce, Services and Small Tourism (Canacope) of Mexico City estimates that the economic spill for the celebration of the Independence Day (September 15) will be around \$276 million MXN, which represents 60% less than previous years. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Jose Luis Alomia, director of Epidemiology in the Ministry of Health, shared that 17 states in the country show a downward trend of COVID-19 cases, which has contributed to a decline of the pandemic in the country. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Mexico had a 17.1% drop in its GDP during the second quarter of the year, making it the third country with the worst economic contraction among the G20 countries. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] 5G technology will create an economic spillover in Mexico of \$730 million USD between 2021 and 2025. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Moody's Investors Service estimates that the manufacturing and tourism sectors in Mexico will be the most affected in terms of job losses due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



STATS: 27, 817 cases of COVID-22, 525 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] This week, the Budget Commission of the Congress will receive several authorities of the Executive Power, which will explain their plans for the execution of the budget lines assigned to their activities. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Executive Power officialized the beginning of the social quarantine phase for the departments of Caaguazú and Concepción. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] [DIGITAL ECONOMY] The President of the Central Bank expressed that the digital economy sector is an important strategic sector to develop, for the job creation. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Director of Health Surveillance, expressed that the region of Alto Paraná is no longer the pandemic epicenter, which is progressively turning towards the Metropolitan Area of the Country. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, during the last two years, Paraguay's exports –which are mainly constituted by alimentary products– reached 35 new countries. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni, manifested that, as the capacity of the health system has reached its limits, the Ministry will initiate a phase of stricter sanitary measures. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to a report, issued by the Ministry of Finances, the payments destined to cover interests generated by the public debt, registered an interannual increase of 13.2% in August. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Minister of Agriculture Santiago Bertoni, expressed that the National Government will continue working an incentive plan, so that rural producers incorporate technology to their productive processes, and improve the quality of their production. He emphasized that agriculture and livestock, means 60% of the Gross Domestic Product. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to the Monthly Estimator of Economic Activity, July's economic activity registered an interannual increase of 0.9%. The activities whose performance improvement explain this number, are mainly agriculture, industry, and construction. ([Source](#))



STATS: 733,860 cases of COVID-19, 30,812 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Congress approved a motion to start impeachment proceedings against President Martin Vizcarra over leaked audiotapes and alleged ties to the singer Richard Cisneros involved in a fraud case. ([Source](#))



LOCAL [MEASURES] In Cusco were created **the Amazon** and Andean Covid-19 Commands, which will allow containing the advance of the virus in the most remote native and peasant communities of the region. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Essalud approved the directive "Operation and Control of the Virtual Integrated Window of the Insured-VIVA" to improve access and the opportunity to attend insurance procedures. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] On Wednesday, September 9, the clinical trials of phase 3 of the candidate vaccine of the Sinopharm laboratory began. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Agriculture Ministry approved the Regulation of the Law for the Promotion of the Development of Agricultural Producers' Markets, through which the formalization of organizations and their inclusion in formal financial services would be promoted. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Government empowered the Health Ministry to sign contracts or agreements with the private sector for financing, co-financing, or providing a collaboration of any kind to help with the contracting of the vaccine against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The State has a margin to guarantee more than 10,000 million soles in credits for micro and small companies (mypes) throughout the country. These resources could benefit more than 400,000 mypes. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Education Ministry is developing the strategy "Todos y Todas conectados". It aims to bring connectivity through a system of web servers that allow the transmission of the program "Aprendo en Casa" to 18,000 educational institutions. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Indecopi and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) launched the Inventors Support Program (PAI) in Peru, which will allow low-income Peruvian inventors and local micro-businesses to access free private patent legal services. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1.808 cases of COVID-19, 45 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Ministry of Economy and Finance hopes to recover some 50,000 jobs after the destruction of jobs as a result of the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Ministry of Tourism asked the Ministry of Public Health to start studying the possibility of enabling special protocols to receive tourists from Argentina and Brazil. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Digital business models are emerging, and more gig economy are legacies of covid-19. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Since the health emergency was declared on March 13, 1,808 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 coronavirus have been registered in Uruguay, 1,513 have already recovered and 250 are developing the disease. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Government introduced modifications and further extended the labeling of food decree, whose inspection will begin in February 2021. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The WHO highlighted the Uruguayan success in fighting the pandemic and assured that Uruguay has one of the most robust and resilient health systems in Latin America, with a sustainable investment based on the political consensus on the importance of investing in health. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY]. The Ministry of Economy and Finance estimated that the fall in the economy in the second quarter was around 10%, although they underlined that positive indicators can already be seen today. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Uruguayan researchers designed a coronavirus test with LAMP technology, which has the advantage of allowing rapid diagnosis in areas devoid of equipment. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Manufacturing industry activity suffered a major blow with the arrival of Covid-19. ([Source](#))