

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 903,730 cases of COVID-19, 24,186 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] By Decree, the National Executive extended until October 25th the mandatory and preventive social isolation, for the AMBA region and the most affected areas of the country. Meanwhile, the rest of the country, continues in the social isolation phase. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Government of the City of Buenos Aires authorized the classes' resumption, in small groups of students, for the last year of every educational level. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Argentinian Chamber of E Commerce and the E-Commerce Institute are currently promoting trainings organized by companies, where specialists explain the participants how to boost their businesses through e commerce. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Authorities from the Ministry of Transport confirmed to be working on the authorizations for the domestic and international flights resumption, which may be officialized for the next weekend. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Consumers' Defense Undersecretary authorized an increase of up to 6% in the prices of the essential products included in the Program Precios Máximos, which contains a diverse list of alimentary products. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] During a meeting of the Federal Health Counsel, Health Minister Ginés González García made an analysis on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, and requested the local health authorities to strengthen the prevention mechanisms, to stop the virus transmission. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] After the International Monetary Fund's visit to the country, in which they met with government officials, worker unions and business chambers; authorities from the financial organism expressed they had achieved a deep understanding of the Argentinian Government's political plans to stabilize the economy. The entity plans to return in November. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Congress approved and turned into law the new Regime of Economy of Knowledge, which creates a system for the promotion of the development of the software industry, and other services related to new technologies. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Minister of Productive Development Matías Kulfas explained at the Budget Commission of the Chamber of Representatives the implications of the 2021 Budget Bill, and assured that he looks forward to reactivating the national industry, and building a diversified exporter sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 5.103.480 cases of COVID-19, 150.689 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry

[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes, affirmed the emergency aid will be not extended beyond December of this year. The Leader of the Chamber of Representants, Rodrigo Maia, supported Guedes' statement and the government signals that it intends not to blow the budget. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] The City of São Paulo postponed the decision to authorize the return to private and public schools on November 3. It intends to wait for the result of the serological census, of covid tests being carried out with teachers and students. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The retail sales rose 3.4% in August compared to July and already exceeds the level before the COVID-19 pandemic by 8,2%, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). Good performance is a result of the payment of emergency aid and interest rate reduction. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] Cities with the largest number of informal workers were the most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil, according to a study by UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) in partnership with IRD (French Institute for Research and Development). [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Inflation remains pressured by food. The 0.64% rise in the Extended National Consumer Price Index (IPCA) in September is the highest for the month since 2003. The increase in food and fuel prices was primarily responsible. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] The National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) announced the simplification of procedures for the approval of a potential vaccine against COVID-19, a process that is less bureaucratic. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised its estimates for the economy. In its World Economic Outlook report, the fund projected a 5.8% drop in Brazilian GDP this year. In June, the estimate was a fall of 9.1%. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] Technology startups test investor appetite and project to raise R\$ 3.5 billion. The movement of technology companies occurs at a time of greater market volatility, which has alienated giants from traditional sectors. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] The European Parliament approved a resolution that mentions changes in the environmental agenda of countries in South America and that can affect the ratified agreement between Mercosur and the European Union. Brazil is mentioned against the commitments signed in the Paris Agreement, about combating global warming and protecting biodiversity. [\(Source\)](#)





STATS: 138.635 cases of COVID-19, 8.326 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jeanine Áñez praises the role of the Bolivian Armed Forces during the fall of the Government of Evo Morales. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The National Service of Protected Areas (Sernap) declared a red alert in the Kaa Iya National Park and Natural Area of Integrated Management (ANMI) of the Gran Chaco, Tarija, due to the forest fires. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Development Financial Institution and Crecer IDF contributed to a total of 230,000 trained female entrepreneurs in the use of digital and technological tools to promote and empower their small and medium businesses. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Health Ministry reinforces controls in border areas of Pando to avoid contagion of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Eastern Agricultural Chamber (CAO) said that the population would consume bread made with transgenic wheat after Argentina authorized the commercial production of this product. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Health Minister ratified that Bolivia would acquire the vaccine against COVID-19 that complies with all the required scientific tests and has the certification of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization (WHO / PAHO). ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Bolivia experiences the low prices of commodities in the international market and the pandemic. It is estimated a fall of more than 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The head of the departmental Expanded Immunization Program (PAI) of Santa Cruz, Boris Chang, highlighted this Sunday the launch of the Electronic Vaccination Registry (EIR), which allowed for better coverage in the country and better control. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Bolivia expressed its interest in being part of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) agreement to initiate forest exports to the countries that make up the European Union (EU). ([Source](#))



STATS: 484,280 cases of COVID-19, 13,396 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government announced that the cities in phases 1 and 2 of the Step by Step Plan will not need permission to vote in the plebiscite on October 25. Voters can move only with their identity card ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] During the past long weekend, sanitary cords were set up in the Metropolitan Region to prevent the massive entry or exit of people. The interregional permits were not valid this time ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Santiago Chamber of Commerce estimates that the digital economy will generate sales of about US\$2 billion this year, 40% more than in 2019. The sector has developed strongly in the midst of the pandemic and has about 500,000 jobs ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Health Ministry will promote the "Digital Hospital", a project that seeks to create a virtual health center, so that specialists can attend patients remotely, being able to interpret tests, diagnose and even indicate medical treatments ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Due to the return to face-to-face classes in some schools in the country, the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (Junaeb), will add new delivery modalities for the food boxes that it grants to students ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] Health Ministry announced that positive COVID-19 cases nationwide fell 11% in the last seven days and more than 1% in the last 14 days. Furthermore, the positivity of PCR tests nationwide reaches only 5% ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] World Bank worsened its estimate for the Chilean economy for this year due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution expects the country to contract -6.3%, a number lower than that forecast last June ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] A study that measured the digital maturity index of companies in Chile concluded that 69% of the organizations are in the lowest level of digitization, while 27% are in the medium level and only 4% are in the phase of greater digital maturity ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] The Chilean startup Baby Cu will begin to manufacture copper and zinc-based face masks, which act as a sanitary barrier. The company won resources from the "Covid-19 Fund" to develop the innovative products ([Source](#)).



STATS: 919,083 cases of COVID-19, 27,985 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The National Government celebrated the release of former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez ordered by Judge 30 of guarantees, Clara Ximena Salcedo. The judge lifted a house arrest order against Alvaro Uribe, who is under investigation for alleged witness tampering. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The localities of Bogota in which the covid cases have rebounded the most are Kennedy, Suba, and Engativá. The speed of contagion has decreased since July, and the curve has dropped in all localities. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to the Superintendency of Industry and Commerce, on average, 30,000 complaints about consumer protection are received per year in Colombia. The peaks occurred on the day without VAT and Mother's Day. Most of the complaints were due to deliveries in e-commerce. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The health minister Fernando Ruiz said that Colombia expanded its quota in the COVAX mechanism, going from 10% to 20% of the maximum capacity allowed to a country for the first round of distribution of vaccines against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Restaurant employees will be able to access different free courses offered by Acodres and the SENA; on customer service, productivity, and other topics that will improve the competitiveness of businesses. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Ministry issued Resolution 1774 of 2020, which defines the parameters to carry out the temporary economic recognition to the Human Talent in Health that provided or is providing services to patients with suspected or diagnosed COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Bank of the Republic presented the figures for public and private debt for July. Regarding the equivalent of this figure to Colombia's GDP, the Bank of the Republic detailed that in July, the total amount is 53.6%. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY]. The Third Committee of the House of Representatives approved in the first debate the bill that seeks to maintain the VAT exclusion of mobile phone plans. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to the results of the PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) of the industrial sector, the sustained growth of production was accompanied by a slowdown in the contraction of new orders, a broad stabilization of employment, and recovery of optimism. ([Source](#))



STATS: 147,315 cases of COVID-19, 12,218 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] 152 officials have changed positions during the 41 months of Lenin Moreno's government. Also, 17 officials have alternated at the head of 28 institutions. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] President Lenin Moreno has 26 days to analyze the package of reforms to the Organic Code of the Judicial Function (COFJ). Consequently, Quito will have judges against corruption and organized crime. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Digital payment methods gained presence during the confinement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Ecuador. This trend will continue in the post-pandemic, according to Julio José Prado, president of Asobanca. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] President Lenin Moreno called for prudence due to the opening and economic reactivation measures. He stressed that Europe is going through a second wave of infections, so they are far from the end of the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) reported that on Monday, October 12, the producers whose plantations are not registered will start. The process will last one year and was ordered by the President of the Republic last August through Executive Decree 1127. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health workers announce new mobilizations to the Government demanding the repeal of the regulation to the Humanitarian Law that threatens their job stability. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The government of Ecuador sent a letter of intent to the manager-director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva. The letter highlights the need for a tax, labor, and social security reform; reduction of the size of the state; the simplification and digitization of processes, reduction of import costs; and competitiveness of the productive sector. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] During the pandemic, Internet speed in Ecuador has grown slightly, according to reports from Ookla's Speedtest Global Index. Despite this, the country remains in positions 90 for mobile connection and 103 for fixed in the world ranking. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Guayaquil is known as the commercial capital of Ecuador. More than 94,000 companies operate nationwide, and 33,800 are domiciled in the city, which represents 35% of the total. Likewise, according to figures from the Guayaquil Chamber of Commerce, 45% of the country's total turnover is generated by the commercial sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 821,045 cases of COVID-19, 83,945 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) said that the money from the eliminated 109 public trust funds will be used for buying millions of COVID-19 vaccines next year. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Mexico City announced the installing of 20 Health Kiosks in public spaces for the detection and isolation of cases of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) postponed until 2021 the consensus to tax digital economies, seeking to avoid unilateral measures. Mexico has already implemented some new taxes on the use of digital platforms since the beginning of 2020. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Mexican government has partnered with AstraZeneca, Pfizer and CanSino to produce over 146.8 million vaccines against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) shared its concerns about the implementation of the Official Mexican Standard (NOM-051) which establishes frontal labeling for processed food and beverages, arguing that it might weaken foreign investment. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Mexico has entered its 11th week of a continuous decrease of COVID-19 cases, “due to the responsible actions taken by citizens,” according to the Covid Czar, Under-Minister Hugo López-Gatell. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) improved its forecast for the Mexican economy with an estimated drop in GDP of 9% for this year, rather than 10.5%. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Scientists have expressed their concern with the elimination of trusts that were supporting 1,300 projects with over \$233 million USD, stating that this could cause a 30 year setback in the scientific development of the country. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to recent data published by The Monthly Industrial Activity Indicator (IMAI) the industrial production in Mexico had a 3.3% increase during August. ([Source](#))



STATS: 50, 344 cases of COVID-19, 1096 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Representatives of the National Executive Power announced several changes in the Government. New officials were appointed in the Ministries of Finances, Industry and Commerce, and International Affairs. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] The Minister of Education explained that the date for the classes' resumption will be up to the Health Ministry's decision, based on the epidemiological situation of every region. According to his words, schools will not be opened simultaneously in all the departments. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] The Government officially presented a Plan for the poverty reduction. Its axis are the strengthening of the social protection, the economic inclusion, and the social integration of national territories and communities. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Government announced the reopening of the Asunción's Airport since October 21st, and of the bridge that connects the national territory with Brazil, since October 15th. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Under the framework of the program of support for the development of exporter companies, financed by the Inter-American Bank of Development, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce included the production of food & beverage, among the activities benefited through financial aid. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] During a meeting organized by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, which counted with the presence of different representatives of the productive sector, representatives of SMES explained that their lack of access to technology, is one of the main difficulties to gain competitiveness at an international level. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Minister of Industry and Commerce launched an initiative to authorize the digital signature, looking forward to the promotion of e commerce. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] Paraguay was considered a safe touristic destination, in terms of epidemiological standards, by an international tourism organization. Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni explained that this achievement was because of the people's commitment. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] According to the Central Bank, the exportation has registered an accumulated decrease of 12,6% in the period between January and September of 2020, if compared to last year. [\(Source\)](#)



STATS: 849,371 cases of COVID-19, 33,305 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government, through the Health Ministry (Minsa), authorized the transfer of 75 million 554,020 soles in favor of the GAVI Alliance in order to finance the initial payment for the acquisition of vaccines against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



LOCAL [MEASURES] The Executive Power transferred a total of 59 million 70,518 soles to various provincial and district municipalities of the Apurímac region, for twelve sanitation and urban equipment projects to be executed. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Digital channels will be prioritized by the Government in the new version of the delivery of the Universal Family Bonus. In this sense, there is a payment schedule and different payment methods. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Congress approved, in the first vote, the law that guarantees access to preventive and curative treatment of the disease caused by COVID-19. The rule states that the distribution, commercialization, and availability of COVID-19 treatment and vaccines will be free, universal, and mandatory. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Despite the pandemic, agricultural exports (traditional and non-traditional) totaled 691 million dollars in August, which meant a growth of 14% compared to what was registered in the same month last year (604 million dollars). ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Peru maintains simultaneous conversations with a range of 13 international pharmaceutical companies for the future provision of vaccines against COVID-19, having signed non-binding agreements with eleven of them. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Finance Minister María Antonieta Alva estimated that next week the Government would implement incentives for the generation of formal employment, in addition to continuing with the Start Peru program in 2021. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] After almost six months of research, a team of Peruvian doctors and engineers has implemented a completely digital clinical record system or also called Electronic Medical Record for the identification, triage, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of patients with COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] During the emergency and up to three months after it, the collection of municipal taxes, the application of withholdings, and the collection of obligations with the financial system are suspended in favor of Micro and Small Businesses (Mypes) without affecting the credit rating. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2.294 cases of COVID-19, 50 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) announced that it will present a bill that will allow the transfer of the license generated during 2019 to 2021, only in the "economically most affected" sectors. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] This week will be essential for the decision of the government authorities on the possible opening of borders for foreigners for the next summer season. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to a study presented by the (ECLAC), the crisis caused in the region by the Covid-19 pandemic forced experts to analyze the possibility of imposing taxes on the digital economy. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] Currently there are 312 people who are suffering from the disease throughout the country, and 51 people have died since the beginning of the health emergency on March 13. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Primary education authorities authorized the gradual and staggered reopening of school canteens, allowing food to be prepared on the premises when appropriate. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] The Director of Health assured that the situation of the pandemic in the country continues under relative control, although we are at a stage that may mark a turning point. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] Latin America and the Caribbean will suffer "the worst economic and health impact" in the world due to the covid-19 pandemic, according to the World Bank, which published an estimate that predicts a fall in regional GDP of 7.9% in 2020. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] Specialists warn about the increase in crimes in cyberspace during the health pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] Global manufacturing production had been slowing its growth in 2019, but the situation was worsened by the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)