

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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**STATS:** 989,680 cases of COVID-19, 26,267 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** By Decree, the National Executive extended until October 25<sup>th</sup> 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]** Looking forward to boosting the export levels, The National Executive agreed with the Agro-industrial Counsel to work on a specific initiative for the activity's development, for which special work groups were created. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The government launched a public e commerce platform called Correo Compras, by which companies, factories and other producers will be able to sell their products online. This service will be for free at first, and then low commissions will be charged. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Ministry of Transport authorized the resumption of international and domestic flights, and long - distance means of transport, for essential workers, and for health reasons. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Senate's committees of Health, and Industry and Commerce are currently working on an initiative to create a system of front labelling for alimentary products. Last week, they received several speakers and specialists to discuss about it. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Government officials, including Chief of Staff Santiago Cafiero and Health Minister Ginés González García presented the Plan AccionAr, by which the Government will strategically intervene and destinate resources to protect of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** In order to promote the investments in national currency, the Central Bank increased the minimum interest rates set for fixed- term deposits. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The National Bank officially launched the credit lines for the purchase of electrical appliances to pay in 36 installments, which will be available until November 30<sup>th</sup> . ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Executive Power launched the Program of Assistance to Strategic Companies in process of Debt Restructuring, to support exporter companies that fulfill some specific requirements related to their financial situation, and number of registered employees. ([Source](#))



STATS: 5.251.416 cases of COVID-19, 154.243 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Jair Bolsonaro government disapproval fell to the lowest level since May 2019, according to a survey conducted by XP Investments and Institute for Social, Political and Economic Research (Ipespe). According to the pool, 31% of the interviewees evaluated the government as bad or terrible and the last month was 36% ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Municipal elections: The mayors' response to the Covid pandemic can define the 2020 election, affirms the political experts. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The President Jair Bolsonaro and ministers presented a new bill to incentive innovation and the creation of startups in Brazil. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** President Jair Bolsonaro affirmed vaccination against Covid-19 will not be mandatory. For the president, it is not possible to enforce those who have already contracted the disease and would be immunized to take the vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The agricultural sector not suffered the impacts of the pandemic and leads the hiring of new jobs in 2020 ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Brazilian government rejected adhering to India and South Africa's proposal to suspended all patents on medicines, vaccines, and products to combat covid-19. The government of Brazil already approve the intellectual property agreements (TRIPS) that leave points to suspend patents in case of need. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Brazilian unemployment rate bites 14% of the population with more than 14 million people seeking jobs, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). During the pandemic period, there was an increase of about 4.1 million unemployed. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Brazilian government launched a new method of payment by a mobile application. The system allows financial transactions in seconds at any time the day, this technology is present in 56 countries. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Coronavac, a Chinese vaccine, starts to be produced in São Paulo this month. In the first stage of the last phase of clinical trials in Brazil, the drug proved to be safe ([Source](#))



STATS: 139,771 cases of COVID-19, 8,481 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Luis Arce, candidate of the Movement for Socialism and former minister of Evo Morales, is the new president of Bolivia. Although the official results have not been published yet, Evo Morales, Nicolás Maduro, and the interim president Jeanine Áñez recognize Arce's triumph. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** El Alto airport in La Paz is at risk of ceasing to operate due to the construction of a building that could obstruct it. The Mayoralty of the said that the construction work must stop as soon as possible. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Banco FIE enabled the service of virtual banking agencies. This innovative system allows people to reserve a space and be attended through a video call with the bank's staff, thus avoiding travel to the financial institution. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** According to the Twenty-fourth Report of the Municipal Risk Index published by the Health Ministry, the number of municipalities with a high risk of COVID-19 infections fell from 66 to 62 in the last week, which represents 18%. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Fearing social conflict after Sunday's elections, people are going to markets, but the government denies that there is a food shortage in the country. The Executive assures that it is only speculation. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Health authorities urged the Bolivian population to cast their vote to elect national government authorities and assembly members, assuming at least seven biosafety measures to vote in a pandemic, to prevent the spread of Covid-19 on this electoral party. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Eight monetary policy measures promoted by the Central Bank of Bolivia (BCB) made it possible to inject 24,771 million Bolivianos into the economy, equivalent to 10% of GDP, and thus maintain the liquidity of the financial system and channel credits ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Technological changes were introduced in the Bolivian presidential elections to give them credibility. The Preliminary Results Dissemination System (Direpre) will replace the Preliminary Electoral Results Transmission System (TREP), which stopped working on election night 2019. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to president elected Luis Arce, manufacturing sector is one of the sector that had received high levels of foreign private investment in the country. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 493,305 cases of COVID-19, 13,676 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Sebastián Piñera visited one of the voting places of the Plebiscite that will be held next Sunday, and reiterated the sanitary measures that will be applied to prevent the spread of COVID-19, among them, the extension of voting hours ([Source](#)).



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The authorities announced that Metropolitan Park Cable Car will reopen on October 23, after being closed for seven months due to the COVID-19 pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Santiago Chamber of Commerce projected that as a result of the pandemic, online sales will reach US\$9.4 billion in 2020, an amount much higher than last year's balance when they totaled US\$6 billion ([Source](#)).



**[COVID RELATED]** Government authorities met with important representatives of the Sinovac laboratory, which is about to begin clinical trials of its "Coronovac" vaccine project in Chile ([Source](#)).



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to data from the Trade Union Association of Supplier Industries, Perishable Groceries increased its sales by 9.8% in August, followed by Food, with 8.1%. Meanwhile, the Beverages, Liquors and Beers category fell 1.9% ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** Health Ministry reported that at the national level, the positivity of COVID-19 cases is 4.9%, while the variation of new confirmed cases is negative by less than 6% in the last week, and less than 11% in the last 14 days ([Source](#)).



**[ECONOMY]** The government launched new program for \$18 billion for the reactivation of micro and small businesses. "Reactivate Pyme" will benefit more than 6,200 SMB's, belonging to any sector ([Source](#)).



**[TECHNOLOGY]** A simulation carried out by the Center for Mathematical Modeling of the University of Chile and the CNRS of France, revealed that a traceability app could reduce by half the number of people hospitalized from COVID-19 ([Source](#)).



**[MANUFACTURING]** With the aim of reversing the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, seven associations of indigenous weavers came together to market their products to obtain better results for the textile business and other local creations ([Source](#)).



**STATS:** 965,883 cases of COVID-19, 29,102 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The National Government announced that it would intensify control at the border crossing between Colombia and Venezuela. According to the border manager, Lucas Gómez, they would work on the protocols to determine the best way to reopen the borders. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** After President Iván Duque lifted the quarantine decreed by the COVID-19 pandemic, some cities began economic reactivation plans by applying strict biosafety measures. However, cities such as Bucaramanga and Cali have registered a slight increase in the number of cases. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Colombian Chamber of Electronic Commerce (CCCE) reported on Wednesday that e-commerce sales in the first eight months of the year were \$ 17.1 billion, 25.3% more compared to the almost \$ 14 billion registered in the same period of 2019. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Health Minister Fernando Ruiz confirmed that the vaccine would be free for all Colombians. Once the Government has the vaccine against the virus, it will have a warehouse with the capacity to store around 15 million doses. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to a study from the University of North Carolina, the National University of Colombia, and the Javeriana University, Colombians can easily perceive which food and beverages are less healthy through the front warning stamps on the front of their packaging. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Administrator of Resources of the General System of Social Security in Health (Adres) reported that they gave the first bonus for healthcare professionals that attended the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Conpes) issued the draft of the policy program for economic reactivation and sustainable growth, with which the Government will try to overcome the crisis that generated the pandemic in terms of income, employment, poverty, debt, consumption, among others. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Colombia ranks third in the 2019 Digital Government Index, an initiative that rates the digital transformation policies of 33 countries evaluated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Due to the targeted restrictions that Bogotá and Medellín implemented in August, the recovery in production and sales in the manufacturing sector stopped. ([Source](#))



STATS: 153,423 cases of COVID-19, 12,395 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Lenín Moreno received the credentials of the ambassadors of Venezuela, Great Britain, Hungary, Chile, Malta and the European Union. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) in Quito denounced the Ecuadorian State for the deaths and injuries in the clashes between the security forces and protesters during the violent protests of October 2019. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the Association of Banks of Ecuador (Asobanca), banking transactions carried out through digital channels have had an increase of 26% during the first half of 2020 compared to 2019. In contrast, transactions in physical channels decreased by 39%. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Minister of Health assured that they do not expect a vaccine before March or April 2021. He affirmed that Ecuador is part of the WHO COVAX initiative, has spoken with AstraZeneca, is negotiating with a laboratory in India, and has letters of commitment with Pfizer and others laboratories. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** With the pandemic, restaurants, cafes, bars, and discos in Ecuador have permanently closed or adapted. Establishments made the decision to reduce their size, close, or move to spaces that allow them to focus on production and not on face-to-face service. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Minister of Health, Juan Carlos Zevallos, highlighted that investment in medical centers has been one of the main actions during the pandemic. He said it has been \$ 25 million in personal protective equipment, medical devices, and PCR diagnostic tests. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The director of the Center for Studies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Gita Gopinath, presented the updated estimated figures on the world economy. Regarding Ecuador, the national economy would contract 11% in 2020. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Rappi started a pilot plan for drone deliveries in Quito. The objective is to reach areas far from the urban area of the city. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Unemployment was reduced by 486,963 workers (48.23%) during September. According to Andrés Isch, Minister of Labor, the recovery is due to the increase in jobs in four sectors: agriculture and livestock (1.1%), commerce (5.4%), manufacturing (6.1%), and construction (13.3%). ([Source](#))



STATS: 851,277 cases of COVID-19, 86,167 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) said that when the vaccine is ready and approved by the Mexican authorities, he would like to publicly be vaccinated in order to send a message of trust to citizens. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The U.S. land border with Mexico will be closed to all non-essential travel until November 21. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the Mexican Association of Online Sales, 2 out of 10 businesses and brands expect e-commerce to represent more than 30% of their total sales by 2021. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** According to the insurance industry in Mexico, COVID-19 has become one of the diseases with the highest costs due to the use of expensive protection instruments by medical personnel and the cost of intensive care services. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Ministry of Economy published a list of dairy products labeled as “cheese” and “yoghurt” that violated different Official Mexican Norms, immediately banning their commercialization and fining the brands. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** There are 8 states that have registered an increase in COVID-19 cases in recent weeks which is a clear indication of a possible second outbreak in the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the unemployment rate in Mexico will reach 5.2% this year and 5.8% in 2021. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** More than 700 scientists from prestigious universities around the world, including Harvard, Oxford, Yale, Cambridge, Stanford, and MIT, signed a document in support of the public trust funds that are set to disappear, asking legislators to reconsider their vote as it will be “a hard blow to science and technology in Mexico”. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Mexico had a 30.5% drop in car sales from January to September. ([Source](#))





STATS: 54, 724 cases of COVID-19, 1188 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Mario Abdo Benítez expressed that the Executive Power is currently working on several changes among the officials of the Ministry of Finances. Apparently, the replacement of the Minister – who was appointed Vice President of the Inter-American Bank of Development- would not be the only one. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The National health Ministry agreed with authorities of the Department of Central, to work on coordinated actions to stop the COVID-19 spread in the region –which is among the most affected ones- . [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the President of the E Commerce Chamber, the volume of purchases through e commerce increased 85% since January, due to the pandemic. The activities with the greatest incidence on this raise, were pharmacies, supermarkets, electrical appliances and electronical devises. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** The Paraguayan borders with Brazil were officially reopened. In this regard, President Mario Abdo Benítez requested for social responsibility, and manifested his hope towards the positive impact of the reactivation of cross-border trade on the economy. [\(Source\)](#) -



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to a report released by the Central Bank, the exportation of primary products increased 15.3% interannually in September. The products with the greatest positive incidence on this figure were soy beans and rice, while those with the greatest negative incidence were corn, and wheat. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** During a public act, Minister Julio Mazzoleni received 30 artificial respirators, which were supplied by the Government of the United States, supported by the Government of Brasil, to strengthen the health system's capacity of response . [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** According to the Central Bank's Estimator of Economic Activity, the Paraguayan economy fell again in August, after two consecutive months of increase. This time, the registered interannual fall was of 2.1%. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Industry and Commerce launched courses of technical assistance on Digital Marketing for SMES. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to the COMEX department of the Central Bank, the exportation of industrial manufactures fell 14.4% interannually, in the month of September. [\(Source\)](#)



**STATS:** 868,675 cases of COVID-19, 33,759 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** To guarantee a responsible reactivation of tourism in Peru, seriously affected by the coronavirus pandemic, the Government presented the “Go back” campaign. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The president of the Council of Ministers, Walter Martos Ruiz, launched in Andahuaylas, in Apurímac, the new hospitalization environment for COVID-19 patients at the Temporary Attention and Isolation Center (CAAT) installed by the National Health Investment Program (Pronis) of the Ministry of Health (Minsa). ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Until October 19, the country's suppliers dedicated to the ceramics, paintings, pipes, and sanitary sectors have the opportunity to expand their sales to State institutions, registering in the call of the Central de Compras Públicas (Perú Compras), that seeks to incorporate them into electronic catalogs. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Ministry of Culture approved the sanitary protocol for the implementation of surveillance, prevention, and control measures against COVID-19 in the productions of advertising and cinematographic audiovisual works. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** To facilitate the access of producers to the credits granted by the Agro Business Support Fund (FAE-Agro), only one document would be requested, which could be the property title. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health specified that the treatment for outpatients with COVID-19 would only contemplate the optional use of ivermectin, and only for people with risk factors (comorbidities) who are in the first days of the disease and by medical prescription. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) approved an initial transfer of 233 million 544 thousand 561 soles in favor of the Ministry of Energy and Mines (Minen) to finance the Electricity Bond. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** To facilitate the activities of the authorities and access to information, the National Forest and Wildlife Service (Serfor) presented a mobile and web application of the forest and wildlife regulations in force and articulated at the service of users of the sector. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) published the operating regulations of the standard that establishes extraordinary provisions for the reprogramming and freezing of debts of natural persons and micro and small companies (mypes) affected by COVID-19. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2.531 cases of COVID-19, 51 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Chamber of Representatives approved the Budget bill sent by the Executive and now goes to Senators. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** After seven months, the education authorities re-establish the compulsory attendance at educational centers throughout the country. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** A team of technicians is making the Coronavirus Uy app compatible with its peers in Argentina and Brazil so that there is a kind of traceability of tourist mobility. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** Currently there are 375 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]** Uruguay has a meat stock to supply international markets affected by the pandemic. In addition, the Government created a working group to reduce the tariff payment and set an agenda. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** The President of the Medical College of Uruguay affirmed that borders should not be opened this summer season for foreigners and called for reinforcing preventive measures. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** The International Monetary Fund released its World Economic Outlook report, which includes new estimates for the Uruguayan economy. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The state telecommunications company ANTEL inaugurated room III of the international datacenter in the city of Pando, after an investment of 12 million dollars, which may be used by public and private companies. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** The hard core of the industry aggravated its situation during the month of August, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics. [\(Source\)](#)