

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 1,090,589 cases of COVID-19, 28,896 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The social, preventive and compulsory isolation was extended until November 8th for the areas of the country with the highest contagiousness indices, which are gradually heading towards flexibilization. Most of the country continues in the social distancing phase. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Government of the Province of Buenos Aires authorized the reopening of schools for those districts with low contagiousness indices, according to the assessment made by the Provincial Ministry of Health. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Secretary of Internal Commerce issued a Resolution, by which suppliers of goods and services will have to clearly inform at their points of sale and web sites, the available payment methods they offer to the public. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Government is currently working on the protocols for the upcoming touristic season. According to the Minister of Tourism Matías Lammens, foreign tourists from neighboring countries will be allowed. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Senate's commissions of Health, and Industry and Commerce issued a favorable verdict on the initiative that would create a system of front labelling for alimentary products, which may be soon treated at the Congress. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Ministry of Health announced an investment of \$5.000.000.000 for the implementation of the Federal Program of Digital Health, which would incorporate digitalization tools to the provision of health services. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Ministry of Productive Development launched the Program of Assistance for Strategic Companies in the process of Debt Restructuring, for which the Government pledged to provide financial assistance to indebted companies that carry forward strategic activities, and satisfy requirements of employment. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The modifications on the Regime of Economy of Knowledge, which had been recently approved at the Congress, were officialized and enacted by the National Executive, and are currently in force. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to the Argentinian Industrial Union, the industrial production may have fallen 5.2% interannually in August, registering a 8% drop, compared to the pre-pandemic level. ([Source](#))



STATS: 5.411.550 cases of COVID-19, 157.451 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry

[EXECUTIVE POWER] The government will extend the presence of the Armed Forces in the Legal Amazon until April 2021, according to Vice President Hamilton Mourão. The Green Operation Brazil aims to combat illegal deforestation and fires in the region. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The São Paulo Governor, João Doria, affirms the first doses of Coronavac, Chinese vaccine, will arrive next week. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] President Jair Bolsonaro announces a tax deduct on video games, consoles and gaming machines will have their industries tax reduced from 40% to 30%. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] President Jair Bolsonaro emptied the announced agreement to purchase the Covid-19's Chinese vaccine, Coronavac, a day after the Ministry of Health confirmed the signing of the agreement. The federal government believes in the efficiency of Sinovac, a vaccine produced by AstraZeneca and Oxford. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] President Bolsonaro will ask the soy traders and the industry due to a 50% increase in the price of the product ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Federal Senate approved the effectuation in the office of Antonio Barra Torres as president of the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa). Torres affirmed that the agency maintains extremely technical and based on science criteria. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Brazil and US sign trade and economic cooperation agreement and Bolsonaro reiterates support for Donald Trump. The bilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (ATEC) aims to facilitate trade negotiations and create mechanisms for good regulatory and anti-corruption practices. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) argues that the 5G auction in Brazil guarantees a competitive market. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Raw materials such as plastic, cardboard, and steel are scarce and the price increased in recent months, according to a survey by the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (Fiesp). The study indicates that 90.1% of the industries in São Paulo are pessimistic in relation to input prices in 2020 ([Source](#))





STATS: 140,779 cases of COVID-19, 8,627 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The administration of Jeanine Áñez approved a disbursement in three installments of Bs 36 million for the payment of salaries of the airport personnel to stop a strike. The aviation sector was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since quarantines paralyzed its activities and prevented the generation of economic income. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] To help economic reactivation, El Alto frees the circulation of up to 80% of public transport and extends working hours. The remaining 20% will be released progressively. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] During the second Digital Fair, different Latin American countries will present technological solutions that have the potential to transform companies of any size, with a focus on SMEs due to the difficult situation they are facing because of the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Departmental Health Service (Headquarters) warned that the misuse of the masks, the lack of physical distancing in the ranks, and other irresponsible behaviors increased during the electoral season. That's one of the reasons a new coronavirus outbreak is expected. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] According to the local government of Santa Cruz, the rainfall that fell during the production cycle was generous and resulted in higher production rates in the field. Producers expect more rain to start the 2020-2021 summer sowing. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Radio Perla Del Acre and the Health Ministry came together through a strategic alliance for the dissemination of messages and information on the prevention of the COVID-19 and other diseases to reach the furthest parts of the department of Pando. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Bolivian Institute of Foreign Trade (IBCE), with data from the National Institute of Statistics (INEA), pointed out that in September, Bolivia registered a trade deficit of 141 million dollars, a negative balance lower than that the same period of the last administration. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Bolivian Telecommunications Chamber (Catelbo) pointed out that the first six months of 2020 were complicated for telecommunications operators due to high operating costs and the rise in the debt index of their users and clients. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The ranking of the largest companies in Bolivia 2020 will make an X-ray of 400 firms. ([Source](#))



STATS: 503,598 cases of COVID-19, 14,877 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Plebiscite 2020 registered high citizen participation, despite the safeguards due to the health emergency. The votes were carried out between strict measures that caused certain delays and lines in some places. In total, the participation exceeded 51% ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] Six municipalities in the Metropolitan Region began phase 4 of the “Step by Step” plan, which allows restaurants to serve indoor customers with 50% of its capacity, maintaining a two-meter distance between table and table. Cinemas can open too ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Covid-19 pandemic significantly increased e-commerce, which meant an increase in the demand for wineries. Thus, this estate sector is one of the few that has not been affected by the economic recession ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Worldometer highlighted Chile as one of the 30 countries in the world with the most PCR tests performed. The country ranks first in Latin America with more than 4 million tests analyzed, which means that 20% of the national population has been tested ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Health Ministry reported that the cinemas that will open its doors from today (phase 4) will be prohibited from selling food and drinks for its clients, and will must guarantee that no one consumes inside the locals ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] Health Ministry reported that nine provinces of the country decreased its new cases of COVID-19 in the last 7 days, and 12 provinces did so in the last 14. Meanwhile, the variation of cases in the last two weeks remained in -12% ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] With 80 thousand jobs, the National Forestry Corporation will contribute to Chile's economic reactivation plan, presented by the Government and focused on job creation, public and private investment, and support for SMEs ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the authorities announced a public tender to implement the 5G network throughout the country, which must digitally connect 366 localities with 4G technology in different rural and extreme areas of the country ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] National Institute of Statistics reported that the Manufacturing Industry Producer Price Index increased 3.9% compared to September 2019 and accumulated 2.2% in the ninth month of the year. Of the 47 classes that make up the index, 40 were higher and 7 presented decreases in its prices ([Source](#)).



STATS: 998,942 cases of COVID-19, 29,802 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] On Wednesday, October 21st, the country experienced new protests. The national strike was called by the Comité Nacional del Paro and had the participation of the workers' unions, the teachers' union, the indigenous minga, and other citizen groups that joined for different reasons to the peaceful protest. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] After extensive days of discussion, the Bogotá Council approved the proposal presented by the administration, called the Marshall Plan, to promote the reactivation of the economy of the city within the framework of the economic crisis that the country is going through. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The executive president of the Colombian Chamber of Electronic Commerce, María Fernanda Quiñones, pointed out that the country has made significant progress in electronic commerce in recent months. However, it is important that users adopt a culture of digital shopping. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Congress received a request letter from President Iván Duque that requests it to process the Bill that creates tax incentives for the financing of vaccines against COVID-19 with an urgent message. The project seeks to encourage companies to make donations to the emergency mitigation subaccount ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] On Wednesday, October 21, the plenary of the House of Representatives approved in a second debate the bill that seeks the implementation of frontal and easily identifiable labels in foods that contain an excess of sugar, sodium, or fat. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Ministry issued Decree 1374 of 2020 that updates the Sustainable Selective Testing, Tracking, and Isolation Program - PRASS. The updates of this Decree include the creation of the National Tracking Contact Center - CCNR, which will have the capacity to make more than 100,000 calls a day to all potential cases of contagion. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Bank of the Republic anticipates a drop of 8.5% in GDP in 2020 and a rebound in the economy of 4.1% in 2021. They expected an inflation rate of 1.5% and one of 2.5% in 2021 with a growing economy. Regarding unemployment, the estimates present a range between 15% and 17% and 14% and 16% in 2021. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] According to the Presidential Advisor for Digital Transformation, Víctor Muñoz, an auction of the 5G spectrum is planned in the last quarter of 2021 for this technology to start operating in 2022. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to data from the Mercantile Registry of the Chambers of Commerce revealed by Confecámaras, 84,724 companies were created in Colombia during the third quarter of 2020. The sectors that grew the most was wholesale and retail trade, which showed a growth of 23% compared to 2019. ([Source](#))



STATS: 161,635 cases of COVID-19, 12,553 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The government of Ecuador seeks to find a mechanism for health security measures to open borders with Colombia and Peru. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The marches in Quito continue for "employment, education, health, and social security." There were clashes between the protesters and the police forces. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Maryleana Méndez, general secretary of the Inter-American Association of Telecommunications Companies (ASIET), explained that Ecuador has two main challenges in digital matters: the extension of coverage, especially to rural areas, and the increase of the technological innovation and renewal component. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] According to President Lenin Moreno, the country reached to agreements with the Pfizer Ecuador and BioNTech initiatives for two million doses; AstraZeneca for five million; and COVAX for two million. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The government promotes the violet economy (gender economy) for social and productive development in the country. One of its focuses is rurality, which seeks to generate a National Strategy for Rural Women to achieve food sovereignty based on Peasant Family Agriculture. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] According to a WHO survey, 1 in 2 people may experience mental health problems due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The government launched the brand "Somos EPS" to create incentives to the Popular and Solidarity Economy through the promotion of local consumption of products and services of companies in the sector. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Ecuador ranks 74th in the United Nations Electric Government Development Index, which measures the digitization of services, quality, and quantity of telecommunications networks. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Minister of Labor, Andrés Isch, announced the Government will implement four new hiring modalities focused on promoting employment in tourism, entrepreneurship, productive sector, and youth employment. ([Source](#))



STATS: 891,160 cases of COVID-19, 88,924 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) issued a decree to officially establish October 23 as a national holiday to celebrate Doctors, with this first commemoration dedicated to the personnel working in the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] José Martin Padilla, a local legislator in Mexico City, has proposed a campaign for maximum broadcast of measures to avoid the spread of COVID-19 using the megaphones located throughout the city. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Sixteen national and international organizations signed a letter directed at 4 legislators to express their concern about the approved measure that will block the use of foreign digital platforms if they fail to comply with Mexican tax legislations. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] According to José Luis Alomía, Director of Epidemiology in the Ministry of Health, this is the 14th week in a decrease in mortality rates, reaching a 6% decrease. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The National Chamber of the Restaurant and Food Industry (Canirac) estimates that between 122,000 and 300,000 restaurants will have to close permanently by the end of 2020 if authorities decide to shut down the economy again with the second wave of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The state of Chihuahua has returned to a red light on the epidemiology traffic light system, meaning mandatory confinement and highly restrictive measures to avoid contagion, due to a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] During the month of August there was a 1.1% increase of economic activity in Mexico; while in June and July there was an increase of 8.9% and 5.7% each. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Senate approved the proposal to eliminate 109 public trust funds that supported issues related to science, technology, culture, sports, climate change, and natural disasters, among others. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) economic activities related to manufacturing increased by 3.3% for the month of August. ([Source](#))



STATS: 59, 594 cases of COVID-19, 1309 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] By Decree, the National Executive officialized the extension until November 15th of the sanitary measures implemented to contain the spread of the virus, in all the Paraguayan territory. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The National Government announced an investment of 17 thousand million Paraguayan guaranies in the department of Misiones, to strengthen the sanitary system, improve the public spaces, roads, social living places, and other works for the communitarian development. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Ministry of Industry and Commerce satisfactorily reported that, out of the total amount of claims initiated due to issues related to consumers' rights in E Commerce, 90% of the cases ended up in conciliations. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] On October 21st, the Government finally officialized the resumption of commercial flights, which had already been authorized in compliance with strict protocols ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Ministry of Agriculture is currently providing technical assistance to rural producers to improve the results of their harvest. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Health Ministry has formally suggested the resumption of classes for senior students of the middle educational level. This return would be gradual and optional, both for students and teachers. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Central Bank of Paraguay confirmed that the annual interest rate for monetary policies will remain in 0.75%. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The National Council of Science and Technology has formally launched a plan for the reactivation of the technical and financial assistance lines, given under the framework of the Program of Innovation for Paraguayan Companies. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Labor Ministry signed an agreement with the Paraguayan Industrial Union to strengthen national SMES by delivering capital assets, supplies, raw materials, technical assistance, and trainings, looking forward to the job generation and economic reactivation. ([Source](#))



STATS: 888,715 cases of COVID-19, 34,149 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Martín Vizcarra announced that the mandatory social immobilization wouldn't apply anymore in all regions since October 25. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Regarding the gradual use of the beaches of Metropolitan Lima, Callao, and Lima Provinces, the Head of State announced that they could be used from Monday to Thursday. On weekends, only the area near to the beach will be used for sports and walks. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis) launched the portal "Join the Amachay Network" so that people who know older adults and people with disabilities in vulnerable situations have the possibility of including them in this network. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Germán Málaga Rodríguez, the principal investigator at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH), reported that registrations are still open to those who wish to participate in the complementary call for 6,000 new volunteers for the COVID-19 vaccine. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Thanks to the "Adopt a ton of potato" campaign—in which neighborhood associations, groups of friends and family, educational institutions, local governments, NGOs, and small and medium-sized businesses actively participate—farmers from various regions have been able to sell more than 360 tons of the product. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Health Ministry (Minsa) sent around 109 tons of medical supplies nationwide through the National Center for Supply of Strategic Resources in Health. The medical supplies included medicines, serological tests, retractable disposable lancets, among others, valued at 11'318,214 soles. ([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] Ancash will be the first region in Peru to implement a mobile contact tracing application that may have had a patient diagnosed with COVID-19, announced the regional governor Juan Carlos Morillo Ulloa. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Ministry of Production approved the new sanitary protocols regarding industrial fishing carried out by the steel and wood fleet to incorporate the necessary protection measures to minimize the risk of contagion and rebound of COVID - 19. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2.851 cases of COVID-19, 53 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The government presented the first results of the audits that it has been carrying out in different state agencies on the management of the previous administration. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The government announced that the next one will be a "restricted summer" of closed borders. In addition, it will increase controls at the border and face-to-face classes will be suspended in Rivera. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] In its document Strategy for Digital Citizenship for an Information and Knowledge Society, prepared by Agesic and UNESCO Montevideo this week the use that Uruguayans make of the Internet was raised. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Currently there are 447 people who are suffering from the disease throughout the country, and 53 people have died since the beginning of the health emergency on March 13. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Producers expect good winter crop yields after the weekend's rains. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Union of the Medicine and Related Industry (Sima) continues in conflict and last Wednesday carried out a protest. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] At the end of the year, some 150 thousand retirees and pensioners, with lower incomes, will receive a year-end basket adjusted according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Institut Pasteur (IP) of Montevideo appealed to artificial intelligence to accelerate its detection processes for Covid-19. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Uruguayan Chamber of Industries (CIU) organized a Webinar where they presented the new Decree No. 268/020 that stimulates investment, job creation and makes more flexible access to tax benefits for the business sector. ([Source](#))