

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 1,381,795 cases of COVID-19, 37,432 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Since the request by the National Executive, the Congress will have an extraordinary sessions period. During this week it is expected that all members of the coalition party agree and define the corresponding initiatives agenda. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Minister of Health of the City of Buenos Aires, Fernán Quirós confirmed the start date of classes, but the Buenos Aires teachers oppose the return under the face-to-face mode. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The banking sector launched a payment aggregation system that will allow to offer transfers to cell phone contacts or payments with different formats (QR, contactless and others) to all their clients, through the articulation between different digital environments. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] The national government held the first meeting of the Vaccination Committee whose objective is to address the different aspects of the vaccination campaign against COVID-19, it was headed by the President of the Nation, Alberto Fernández. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] At its second informative meeting, the plenary of the General Legislation, Health, Industry and Consumer Defense committees heard opinions on the labeling project from business chambers and health professionals. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] The Trade Union Association of Health Professionals of the province of Buenos Aires (Cicop) initiated a 24-hour strike to demand a salary increase, breaks and licenses during the coronavirus pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] Exports fell 21.6% compared to the same month of 2019 (-1,273 million dollars), becoming the worst fall of the year, while imports were 2.8% lower compared to the same month of the previous year (-117 million dollars) being the lowest decrease of the year. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] Ahora 12 program sales grew by 29.7 percent in October in real terms, compared to September, in a context of business reopening due to the reduction in the number of coronavirus cases, especially in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA). [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] The Pro Tejer Foundation presented its annual balance where it highlights that, despite the stoppage caused by the coronavirus, the textile industry is recovering with good indicators in production, investment and employment. [\(Source\)](#)



STATS: 6.090.197 cases of COVID-19, 169.569 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jair Bolsonaro said that governors and mayors need to explain the 6.86 million tests for the diagnosis of the new coronavirus that are "stranded". ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The health departments of the city and state of Rio de Janeiro decided to expand the supply of beds for cases of Covid-19 in Rio by more than 200 and to suspend elective surgery in the beginning of December due to the increase in occupancy rate. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Experts predict Black Friday to be the most digital of all time. Survey by the Brazilian Electronic Commerce Association (ABComm) estimates online sales growth of 77% in 2020 in Brazil compared to last year. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Brazil again registered an increase in the rates of transmission of the coronavirus according to data released by Imperial College in London. The virus transmission rate reached 1.10 in the country. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Asked on social media about rising food prices, President Jair Bolsonaro blamed the Covid-19 pandemic on Monday and said measures of social detachment have disfigured the market. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The National Congress committee that accompanies measures to combat Covid-19 approved invitations to the Minister of Health, Eduardo Pazuello, to clarify the stranding of almost 7 million tests for the diagnosis of the new disease that is about to expire. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The covid-19 pandemic has no end date, but the special budget created to combat the effects of the disease does. Unless Congress renews the public calamity decree valid until the end of the year, January 1, 2021 will mark the sudden end of emergency funds for health and programs that help the economy. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The pandemic accelerated trends in the Investor Relations area that were already gaining momentum in recent years, mainly in relation to the use of technology. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The economic effects of the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to produce chain reactions. One sector that was hit hard was the textile that today faces the lack of raw materials and inputs. ([Source](#))



STATS: 143,922 cases of COVID-19, 8,904 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Minister of Economy, announced that the suspension of the payment of the external debt service will be negotiated before the international creditors until Bolivia recovers economically. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Given the possibility that infections and deaths in the municipality will increase again, the municipal authority announced that the Municipal Government of La Paz is taking preventive measures to be able to give a timely response. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Internet purchases in Bolivia grew by 21% due to COVID-19. According to Kolau's report, in January of this year, digital consumption in Bolivia had a record of 46%, but this month the percentage increased to 67%. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The German ambassador to Bolivia made a formal visit to the Minister of Health, to whom he reaffirmed his country's support to help improve the response capacity of the Bolivian health system in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the correct conservation, transportation, distribution and supply of vaccines against this disease. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Santa Cruz agricultural sector denounced that in the recent months the illegal entry of food products such as chicken and pork meats, sausages, dairy products, potatoes, corn and sorghum has increased due to the devaluation of the currencies of neighboring countries. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Minister of Health, and the representative of the Embassy of Spain in Bolivia, highlighted the need to reinforce cooperative relations in the field of training of medical specialists as part of the strengthening of the national health system. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The construction and mining sectors, the worst hit by the pandemic in the country, registered a "slight" improvement in August 2020 with a drop of 8.5 and 0.5 percent, respectively, in the accumulated variation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Banco FIE signed an alliance with Kolau, Silicon Valley technology, leader in electronic commerce in Latin America and promoter of the My Pyme Digitization Plan, which will allow some 100,000 Bolivian MSMEs to have a website with a "payment button." ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] A total of 4,656 companies were closed in the country through October. However, another 11,853 were opened until the same month, which left a positive balance of 7,197, according to the latest Fundempresa report. ([Source](#))



STATS: 542,080 cases of COVID-19, 15,106 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Sebastián Piñera presented the first phase of the plan to reopen borders for foreigners not residing in Chile, which can be carried out only through the Santiago international airport and gradually expanded, according to epidemiological conditions ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Metropolitan Region registered the highest number of active cases of COVID-19 in the last 15 days, 1,921 people in the contagion phase, according to the daily report of the Health Ministry ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to the consulting Kawésqar Lab, in Chile the online sales channel will acquire as important a relevance as the local store and, consequently, this store not will disappear, but that it will have to be reformulated ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Authorities announced that from today, trips between different regions of the country and between cities in phases 3, 4 and 5 of the Step by Step plan, can only be made with a health passport and not with an interregional permit ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] 603 boxes of food will be distributed to vulnerable people on the Easter Island as part to reopen the area in the COVID-19 context. In addition, the municipality placed an order for food kits for adults over 70 years of age ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] Health Ministry announced that the variation of new cases of COVID-19 at the national level is -3% and 0% in the last 7 and 14 days respectively. In addition, ten provinces decreased its cases in the last seven days and 11 provinces in the last 14 ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] The Government launched “Organizations in Action” fund, an initiative focused on delivering \$750 million Chilean pesos to 376 social organizations (communities, neighborhood associations, sports clubs) to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] Doctors from the Metropolitan Region are monitoring COVID-19 patients with the CareYou, a Chilean app that works with a multiparameter sensor that measures the patient's levels from the smartphone, to avoid unnecessary exposures of the infected ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] The COVID-19 pandemic is promoting the development of copper-based antimicrobial solutions in Chile. This industry currently has more than 40 exponents with products that use this metal as a base. Now they seek to expand to the world ([Source](#)).



STATS: 1,255,979 cases of COVID-19, 35,479 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Iván Duque appointed Susana Correa as the new manager for the reconstruction of San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina. Correa affirmed that they would be working on the removal of rubble and the delivery of humanitarian aid in the first ten days. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The Mayor's Office of Bogotá announced that it has just completed the transfers corresponding to the fourth payment cycle of Bogotá Solidaria - Renta Basica Bogota. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Greater space for products, hiring of people, and new skills is the action plan that e-commerce companies are using to respond to what will be the shopping season and Christmas in the year that the COVID-19 has changed. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The bill that declares the vaccine against COVID-19 of general interest and seeks to generate mechanisms and incentives to acquire it was postponed in its second debate in the Senate by the number of proposals presented by the congressmen. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Agriculture Ministry announced that the farmer market days would be reactivated in some areas of Bogotá such as Usaquén, Centro, Alcalá, Plazoleta de Lourdes, and Salitre on November 21. These days seeks that farmers can sell their crops directly and at a good price. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Some senators in the Congress of the Republic proposed adding a new paragraph to the so-called Vaccine Law. The bill would include a new condition that exempts from gratuity (in the acquisition of the vaccine against Covid-19) strata 5 and 6. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Negotiations for the minimum wage for 2021 will begin on November 30 and will take place virtually. Experts will participate during these negotiations to analyze from their perspective the effects of the pandemic on the labor market. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Mayor's Office of Medellín began the 5G technology implementation pilots with the implementation of a virtual reality education use case in two rooms of the Teacher's Innovation Center (MOVA). ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] During September 2020, imports of manufactures participated with 77.9% of the CIF value of total imports (\$2,708.9 million CIF).. ([Source](#))



STATS: 185,944 cases of COVID-19, 13,225 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Ecuador and the United States hope to finalize a First Phase Trade Agreement before the end of 2020. The agreement does not contemplate sensitive issues for the country, so it will not have to be ratified by the Ecuadorian Congress. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Juan Zapata, director of ECU 911, said that on Saturday, November 21, there were 60% more crowds than last week (230 vs 144 crowds). This is due to the Christmas shopping season. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The collection of VAT on digital services has generated complaints because there are companies such as Apple, Amazon, and Google Store that do not distinguish between good or service and record everything in the same way to make the withholding. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] President Lenin Moreno announced that the COVID-19 vaccine would be available since January 2021 in Ecuador. It will serve to vaccinate 30 thousand people each day, around 9 million people in total. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The use of credit cards in the country fell 27% between January and August 2020. Payments with credit cards fell 66% in restaurants. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Ecuadorian Pharmaceutical Laboratories Association (ALFE) and the Ecuadorian Chamber of Industries and Producers of Medicines (CIPME) rejected the public purchasing system of medicines for public hospitals of the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security and ISSFA. They claim that it multiplies corruption. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to Mauricio Pozo, Minister of Finance, Ecuador is studying the creation of a productive bond to generate liquidity and help the private sector to overcome the crisis due to the pandemic. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Andrés Michelena, Minister of Telecommunications, proposed the creation of a Latin American Fund for Rural Deployment with Telecommunications Infrastructure to reduce the digital gap in the region. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] According to Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC executive secretary, mentioned that the main engines for economic recovery in Latin America are: a new and greener energy matrix; urban electromobility; the digital revolution; the health manufacturing industry; the bioeconomy; and the circular economy. ([Source](#))



STATS: 1,049,358 cases of COVID-19; 101,926 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) said that the criticism received for the more than 100,000 deaths due to COVID-19 have “political purposes in order to discredit the government”. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Ario Bojórquez, president of the National Council of Merchants and Service Providers (CONACO) in the state of Sonora, said that the closure of the US-MEXICO border has benefited the local economy, with Mexicans spending money in the state rather than in the US. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] According to the Federal Institute of Telecommunications, the 5G network will help Mexico consolidate its digital economy. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Minister of Health, Jorge Alcocer, shared that the federal government will provide financial support for funeral expenses to people who have lost a family member due to COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Restaurants in Mexico City will no longer be able to serve alcohol after 7 pm in order to limit costumers from staying too long in the establishment. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] According to the COVID Resilience Ranking developed and published by Bloomberg, Mexico is the worst country, out of 53, in terms of how it has managed the health emergency, just after Argentina and Peru. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Mexican peso is close to returning to 19 units per US dollar, which has not happened since March 5, that is, before the economic shutdown in the country. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Solarever, a Mexican company that manufactures solar panels, signed an agreement with UNAM, UAM and the University of Colima to promote R&D of new solar technologies in the country. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The president of the Mexican Business Council, Antonio del Valle, shared that the pandemic gives an opportunity to strengthen chain values in the manufacturing industry in the North American region in order to increase the competitiveness of the region. ([Source](#))



STATS: 77,072 cases of COVID-19, 1665 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The President of the Republic, Mario Abdo Benítez, has received the credentials of three new ambassadors accredited to the National Government. They are the diplomatic representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the French Republic, and Japan.

([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The 4 Family Health Units (USF) enabled in the cities of Ypané, Capiatá and Luque benefit about 20 thousand inhabitants of the area. The new sanitary infrastructures are part of the 25 USF built by the Government in the Central department, through financing from Itaipú Binacional.

([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY]

The head of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (Mitic), Alejandro Peralta Vierci, has reported on the digitization of procedures in the country during the virtual panel of Good Practices at the VI Ministerial Meeting of Digital Government, organized by the GEALC Network, the OAS and the IDB.

([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Executive Power has promulgated the Law that establishes compensation measures for health personnel affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which contemplates a payment of 50 minimum wages, about G. 100 million, for cases of death from the virus at that time health emergency.

([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The quarantine measures have modified the consumption habits of Paraguayans, mainly in food and household products, giving priority to the local industry where 7 out of 10 prefer national foods. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has announced that it will enhance assistance in mental health and diabetes, which due to the conditions generated by covid-19, were greatly affected. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Registered exports of primary products have amounted to US\$ 2,646.2 million, which represents an increase of 18.6% compared to the same period of the previous year. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY]

The implementation project of the National Fiber Optic Network is 70% complete after one year from the date stipulated for its completion. They affirm that the works will be finished before Christmas. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] In October 2020 there was an increase of 8.2% compared to October 2019, 221,947,471 dollars. The platforms included are those of Meat and derivatives, Food and beverages, Forestry and floriculture, Textile and clothing, Biofuels, Auto parts and assemblies and Chemical / pharmaceutical. ([Source](#))



STATS: 949,670 cases of COVID-19, 35,641 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Francisco Sagasti assumed the presidency of Peru, and in his first Message to the Nation he indicated that he will implement strategies to reduce the cases of COVID-19, taking into account the particularities of each region of the country. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] In the Loreto region the delivery of food baskets has been managed to date for the benefit of 225,498 vulnerable citizens, belonging to indigenous or native peoples. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] Ipsos Peru, in its study on the "Online Buyer", points out that the growth of Peruvian cyber shoppers amounts to 6.6 million during the pandemic. E-commerce is expected to contribute to the economic revitalization of the country at Christmas. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Minister of Health, Pilar Mazzetti, reported that we could have a second wave of COVID-19 infections between two and six months. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The National Chamber of Tourism (Canatur) pointed out that the return of private cars on Sundays will increase consumption in restaurants by 30%. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Carlos Neuhaus, a member of the Vaccine Command, said that in December a total of 50,000 doses of Pfizer's vaccine against COVID-19 will arrive in Peru with its own refrigeration system. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) published the supreme decree that authorizes the issuance of a centennial bond to ensure funds that will be used to contain COVID-19 and to finance part of the public budget. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] The Ministry of Education reported that they are equipping 60,000 tablets with educational software, to be delivered as soon as possible and thus complete the million tablets offered by the State. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Attracted by the quality of Peruvian manufacturing technology, about 190 buyers from Latin America, the United States, Europe and Asia will participate in Industria Peru 2020, the most important business conference in the sector at the national level, Promperú reported. ([Source](#))

COVID-19 PULSE - PUBLIC AFFAIRS LATAM

Tuesday, November 17 - Monday, November 23, 2020.

Uruguay



STATS: 4.699 cases of COVID-19, 71 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Lacalle Pou received in Anchorena (Colonia) his Argentine counterpart, Alberto Fernandez, in the first meeting of both leaders since the inauguration of the Argentinian President. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] Although a sustained increase in cases in recent days, Lacalle Pou said that he does not plan to back down from any activity. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] During the pandemic, different mobile payments' apps registered increases in their operations volume. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] A report from the MSP indicates that 6% of the deceased had no illnesses and 20% were under 65. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] A recent report highlights the response of the Uruguayan State to ensure food and hygiene products during the pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] The government begins to define the schedule for vaccination against the coronavirus for the second part of the first half of 2021. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] Consumer confidence had the biggest monthly drop in October after the March crash. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] Researchers of Clemente Estable Institute will present analysis to the MSP at the end of the month on a test developed for the detection of covid-19 through saliva. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] Export prices fall in September, according to the latest report prepared by the Uruguayan Chamber of Industries. [\(Source\)](#)