

COVID-19 PULSE

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



STATS: 1,173,533 cases of COVID-19, 31,140 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] In order to ease the effects of the crisis on the most vulnerable sectors, the National Executive extended until January 31st the Resolution by which maximum prices are set for massive consumption products. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Authorities from the Health Ministry of the Province of Buenos Aires confirmed to be working on a strategic plan to set the necessary conditions for the vaccination against COVID-19, once the vaccine is available. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Central Bank issued a new regulation, by which a regulatory framework called “Transferencias 3.0” was created, to generate interoperable QR Codes both for banks and virtual wallets. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Tourists from neighbor countries were authorized to enter the country for touristic reasons, as a pilot test for the upcoming season. ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Senate gave half approval to the bill that creates a front labeling system for food & beverage, which intends to set a warning octagon-shaped stamp for products with high content of sodium, sugars, total fats, saturated fats and calories ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The initiative that declares the public interest on the COVID-19 vaccine was turned into law by the Senate. Through these regulations, the National Government is granted the necessary powers to promote agreements with the pharmaceutical industry to obtain the vaccine with greater agility. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The 2021 Budget bill was approved by the Chamber of Representatives, and passed to the Senate, where it may be turned into law. Among the main projections set by this bill, during 2021 a 5% growth of the national GDP is expected, together with an annual inflation of 29%, and a fiscal deficit of 4.5% -of GDP- ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Looking forward to the development of data management technology, the Government authorized the provision of the digital signature service, with key custody, setting the formal requirements for ensuring the technical quality of the service. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The National Executive extended until the end of the year the Plan of Assistance to Work and Production, by which the Government contributes to the payment of salaries, of companies economically affected by the pandemic. ([Source](#))



STATS: 5.554.647 cases of COVID-19, 160.282 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry

[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Jair Bolsonaro declares support for Trump for re-election. If Joe Biden wins, the environmental issue could drive governments away. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] The schools of São Paulo State resume face-to-face classes this week and the return is optional. The regular classes were suspended since March in the capital when quarantine was implemented to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Pix, a new Brazilian Central Bank payment method, starts operation on Tuesday. This is a new way to instantly transfer money to replace an alternative to traditional formats. [\(Source\)](#)

[COVID RELATED] President Jair Bolsonaro affirmed be contrary to the mandatory vaccination of COVID-19. The political parties not accepted and called the Supreme Federal Court (STF) to judge whether the vaccine of COVID should be or not mandatory for all Brazilians. Health professionals fear the politicization and judicialization of the vaccine. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The increase in inflationary of products and the reduction of fifty percent of the Covid emergency aid, already affects the supermarket sales that fell 10% in the last month, according to the São Paulo Supermarket Association (Apas). Food is the major contributor with highlights for beef (4.83%)-the most important item among foods-, soybean oil (22.34%), rice (18.48%), and milk (4.26%). [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] Anvisa gives endorsement to resume vaccination tests of one of the vaccines produced by the US in Brazil. Tests were paused for analysis after reporting an adverse event in a volunteer. [\(Source\)](#)

[ECONOMY] After seven months, economists are again estimating inflation above 3% in 2020. The economic projection retraction this year remained at 4.81% last week, according to Central Bank based on a survey conducted last week. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] Brazilian Government presented to the congress a bill about a legal framework for startups. According to the Ministry of Science and Technology, Marcos Pontes, the proposal will help the innovative companies to grow and will encourage the sector in Brazil [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] The Brazilian Industry renews record expansion in October, with a historic increase in jobs, according to a survey by the Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) released on Tuesday. [\(Source\)](#)



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



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government assures that it leaves a stable economy and with inflation less than 1% and, it will be the decision of the next legislative administration whether or not to approve the international credits for 1,200 million dollars. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Due to the economic crisis aggravated by the coronavirus pandemic, Cochabamba business people joined the proposal that this year the payment of the Christmas bonus be made more flexible to cancel it in installments and in more time. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy presented the Accelera Mypes digital platform that will benefit micro and small entrepreneurs to boost their businesses within the framework of economic reactivation and the preservation and generation of jobs. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The rate of COVID-19 infections in Bolivia is decreasing. The number of municipalities with a high level of COVID-19 cases fell from 58 to 43 in the last week, meaning that only 12.6% of the 339 municipalities in the country show high risk. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Potato producers from the Santa Cruz valleys managed to get the authorities to commit to improving control at the borders and in the markets and to punish people who import Peruvian potatoes. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Active Community Surveillance in the municipality of Potosí was vital to control the COVID-19 pandemic and maintain a low fatality rate. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Bolivian Association of Private Banks closed the successful cycle of financial education training Discover the simplicity of Finance, which reached more than 16,000 people. The initiative aims to improve financial services in the framework of the health emergency caused by COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Aurum, the commercial line of the Bolivian technology equipment company Quipus, will send a thousand laptops to Portugal in a few days. That same line of devices has discounted prices only for the Bolivian population, considering that the demand is high since the COVID-19 outbreak digitized many activities. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The National Confederation of Micro and Small Businesses demanded from the president-elect an "exclusive injection" of \$ 1.5 billion to reactivate the economy of that sector. This union was the most affected by the pandemic. ([Source](#))



STATS: 513,188 cases of COVID-19, 14,302 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Sebastián Piñera attended the first meeting of the advisory council for the "Step by Step Plan, Open Schools", organized by the Education Ministry and UNESCO. Currently, 863 educational centers in Chile have requested to open its doors to gradually resume face-to-face classes. 238 already did ([Source](#)).



[LOCAL MEASURES] Have returned to work the bicycle recreational lanes that connect Santiago, Providencia and Las Condes, closed since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The circuit extends for 5.5 kilometers and can be used every Sunday between 9 am-2 pm ([Source](#)).



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] A Kawésqar Lab research revealed that the health crisis multiplied online purchases: from 33% in March, when the Covid-19 pandemic began, to 77% in July. In addition, 71% of consumers will continue to use the online channel ([Source](#)).



[COVID RELATED] Authorities presented the protocol and tips guide for the use of the beaches, in the context of Covid-19. People who enjoy to the coast can be without a face mask only when they are not moving and are two meters or more from other people ([Source](#)).



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Agriculture Ministry appreciated the efforts of the agri-food sector during the COVID-19 pandemic to guarantee the functioning of the supply chain and the access to food for the Chilean people ([Source](#)).



[HEALTH] Health Ministry reported that at the national level, confirmed cases of COVID-19 have fallen 7% in 7 days and 6% in the last 14. Also, 26% of new cases originated by active search and 35% are asymptomatic ([Source](#)).



[ECONOMY] Economy Ministry authorized the restart of private construction works in quarantined areas throughout the country to recover 26 thousand jobs, after the good results obtained in the two pilot plans for the sector, promoted by the authority ([Source](#)).



[TECHNOLOGY] In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, software company Red Hat and Universidad del Desarrollo launched a science and technology content platform focused on children. The website offers educational conferences and science experiments classified by age ([Source](#)).



[MANUFACTURING] The National Institute of Statistics revealed that manufacturing production increase 5.3% in the country, the first increase since the health crisis began, exceeding market expectations that expected a decrease of 2.3%, after the sharp drop of 8.2% of the previous month ([Source](#)).



STATS: 1,093,256 cases of COVID-19, 31,670 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The committee to promote a new referendum was registered in the National Registry to support the figure of the revocation of the President of the Republic. Senator Roy Barreras led the initiative. It proposes to incorporate in the Constitution, the figure of revoking the President after two years in office. [\(Source\)](#)



[LOCAL MEASURES] Despite the recommendations of not celebrating Halloween, part of the population decided to ignore it. On the night of October 31, 121 establishments were sealed, and 528 fees were imposed, according to Bogota's Secretary of Security. [\(Source\)](#)



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The ICT Ministry and Findeter opened a call to contract the operation of two projects that seek to benefit around 10,000 Colombian merchants, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. [\(Source\)](#)



[COVID RELATED] President Iván Duque announced, that, after listening to experts in the field of health, he decided that the selective isolation with individual distancing will last until November 30th. [\(Source\)](#)



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Minister of Agriculture, Rodolfo Zea, launched a new call for the Productive Alliances program, with an investment of \$ 88,400 million, to strengthen productive capacities and the generation of income for 85,614 producers. [\(Source\)](#)



[HEALTH] Regarding vaccines against COVID-19, the Government asked Congress to speed up the bill that allows the establishment of mechanisms to attract resources from private sector companies in the National Risk Management Fund in exchange for taxes. [\(Source\)](#)



[ECONOMY] The DANE has just reported that unemployment in Colombia for September was 15.8%, 1% less than in August, which presented a figure of 16.8%. During July, the number of unemployed in the country reached 20.2% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



[TECHNOLOGY] The ICT Ministry and the High Council for Women presented the program 'Knowledge Transfer for Women Entrepreneurs', which seeks to train 6,000 women, between 18 and 60 years old, for free on issues of Artificial Intelligence and cloud computing. [\(Source\)](#)



[MANUFACTURING] In September this year, exports of fuels and products of extractive industries participated with 37.4% of the total FOB value of external sales. Likewise, the manufacturing sector participated at 25.8%, while agriculture, food, and beverages with 25.2%, and other sectors with 11.6%. [\(Source\)](#)



STATS: 165,562 cases of COVID-19, 12,692 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] President Lenin Moreno spoke about the possible trade agreement with the United States. He said the process is in the negotiation phase, but it is unlikely to develop during his presidential term. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] Distancia2 platform in Quito allows through camera and machine learning mechanisms to identify the formation of agglomerations and other violations to the request of social distancing. However, the platform has not been enough. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The use of digital coupons has increased during 2020; it has increased the demand for online products and services. However, despite the pandemic, physical coupons remain on the market. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Xavier Solórzano, Deputy Minister of Governance and Health Surveillance, stated that the initial amount to purchase COVID-19 vaccines is USD \$ 150 million. The Government announced the existence of agreements with Pfizer and BioNTech, AstraZeneca, COVAXX, and COVAX mechanism. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The protocols to enter cinemas, museums, restaurants, and parks are; permanent use of a mask; reduced capacity and security measures; avoid crowds; electronic payments preferably; and constant handwashing. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Minister of Health said that doctors who died by COVID-19 were infected in the social sphere and not in hospitals. He claimed that they brought the disease to the hospitals. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Finance Minister Mauricio Pozo affirmed that one of the commitments for the International Monetary Fund loan is to approve an anti-corruption law in the Assembly before the end of 2020. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] A study by the International Labor Organization (ILO) identified eight economic sectors with the potential to create employment and entrepreneurship in Quito and Guayaquil: e-commerce activities, software development, internet, basic education, green and healthy transportation, health care, and agriculture. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The Government expects an unemployment rate of 4% at the end of 2020. Measures such as job preservation agreements and shorter working hours saved several jobs. The most benefited sectors were: agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, and construction. ([Source](#))



STATS: 933,155 cases of COVID-19; 92,100 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] On October 31, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) declared a national three-day mourning period in remembrance of COVID-19 victims. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] The state of Durango has returned to a red light in the epidemiology traffic light system, becoming the second state in the country to return to highly restrictive measures due to a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The streaming platform Disney+ will become available in Mexico through Izzi Telecom on November 17. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] Ricardo Monreal president of the Senate's Political Coordination Board, has promoted a reform to allow remote voting in Congress in case the country faces a second wave of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Over 300 employees and owners of bars and restaurants protested in the municipality of Ecatepec to demand the reopening of their establishments. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] Marcelo Ebrard, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced that the first doses for a COVID-19 vaccine arrived to the country to begin Phase 3 of the clinical trials by CanSino Bilogics. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Mexico's GDP increased by 12% during the third quarter of the year. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Óscar Yasser Noriega, also known as Akira, passed away due to COVID-19 complications on November 2. Akira, founder of Atomix, was a pioneer of the tech and gaming industry in Mexico. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] 18 out of the 22 manufacturing industries reported "positive numbers", with a 14% monthly increase in the clothing industry. ([Source](#))



STATS: 63,731 cases of COVID-19, 1418 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Óscar Llamosas Díaz was appointed as the new Minister of Finance, replacing Benigno López, who has resigned. The President took oath to the new minister in the government palace. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] In order to strengthen coverage in the provision of drinking water in the different communities, the National Government delivered three tanker trucks to the Paraguay Sanitary Services Company (Essap), through an investment from the Yacyretá Binational Entity (EBY), of almost 1.8 billion guaraníes. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY]

The Commission of Industry, Commerce, Tourism and Cooperativism of the House of Representatives ruled for the approval of the bill “On trust services for electronic transactions of electronic documents and electronic transferable documents”. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Government of Paraguay has permanently and unrestrictedly enabled the crossing of the International Friendship Bridge, which connects Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, and Foz de Iguazú, Brazil. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] Concludes the ninth instalment of the "My family school lunch" program that, from March to day has delivered 544,462 school lunch and snack kits, representing over 8 million kilos of food. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Ministry of Health agreed to make payments of bonuses on exposure to COVID-19 to workers of the Social Security Institute (IPS). ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The Central Bank of Paraguay (BCP) presented its latest projection of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the end of 2020 with an estimate of 1.5% of GDP contraction, a less severe forecast than last July. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY]

National Electricity Administration (Ande) acquires 7,200 transformers that will increase the availability of power in the Paraguayan electrical system. This responds to a long-awaited demand on the part of the industrial sector. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING]

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the establishment and operation of the first Technological Centre for Auto Parts in Paraguay. ([Source](#))



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



[EXECUTIVE POWER] The Government published the Emergency Decree 127-2020 to promote the recovery of formal employment, encouraging the hiring of labor and the preservation of jobs through the granting of a subsidy to private sector employers affected during the state national emergency declared by COVID-19. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES] With the use of the so-called Paying Carts, the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis) began phase 2 of the payment process of the new version of the Universal Family Bonus (BFU) to 302,038 households in remote areas with difficult access of the country. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] To avoid the attendance of users, the National Superintendency of Migration approved the virtual procedure of the service provided exclusively called Permit to Work. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] The Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism, Rocío Barrios, delivered the Safe Travels Seal to the city of Cusco, the first safety and hygiene seal in terms of tourism in the world. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Minagri) announced that Peruvian producers would be able to export our gold grain “quinoa” to the Colombian market following the agreement reached by the National Agrarian Health Service (Senasa) with the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA).([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The Uliachin Health Center, located in the district of Chaupimarca, began processing molecular tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19 after its laboratory completed the validation process of compliance with requirements and received authorization from the National Institute of Health (INS) of the Health Ministry (Minsa). ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] The plenary session of Congress approved in the first vote the withdrawal of funds from former pension fund administrators (AFPs) for up to 17,200 soles as a way to face the coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Sunat expanded the use of the Integrated Virtual File System (SIEV) for the processing of electronic files related to claims. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] The D.U. No. 127-2020 collects for the first time in Peru the regulation of digital disconnection in remote work. The goal is to prevent abuse and prevent companies from requiring staff to be online at all times. ([Source](#))



STATS: 3.165 cases of COVID-19, 60 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



[EXECUTIVE POWER] Demonstration of the PIT-CNT trade union center against the government's budget adjustment in the public sector. ([Source](#))



[LOCAL MEASURES]. The Summer Plan announced by the authorities that includes discounts and special benefits, both for tour operators and consumers will be effective by December 1st. ([Source](#))



[DIGITAL ECONOMY] The pandemic changed the work dynamics, the execution of tasks and the business models of many companies that were forced to accelerate their digital transformation processes and seek allies. ([Source](#))



[COVID RELATED] During the week, there were 3 days with a record of positive cases for Covid since the health emergency was declared in the country, a situation that worries the authorities who foresee upcoming weeks with an increase in cases. ([Source](#))



[FOOD AND BEVERAGE] The changes in Uruguayan eating habits since the coronavirus pandemic began, according to a study by the Food Institute (INDA) together with the University of the Republic. ([Source](#))



[HEALTH] The University of the Republic inaugurates the first equipment for disinfection of masks with UV light at the Clínicas Hospital. ([Source](#))



[ECONOMY] Government data confirm that Uruguay is the Latin American country that invests the least to address the economic crisis of Covid 19. ([Source](#))



[TECHNOLOGY] Uruguayan scientists awarded internationally for the development of a new drug against ALS. ([Source](#))



[MANUFACTURING] Within the framework of Industry Day, the Uruguayan Chamber of Industries analyzed the current situation and the challenges facing the sector in a context of global uncertainty. ([Source](#))