

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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**STATS:** 1,985,501 cases of COVID-19, 49,398 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Alberto Fernández held a videoconference with the Prime Minister of Portugal, Antonio Costa, in which they analysed the epidemiological situation in both countries and reviewed different aspects of the bilateral agenda. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** A resolution of the Ministry of Labour ordered the entry into force of the Telework Law as of April 1, when 90 days have elapsed since the end of the social, preventive and compulsory isolation. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Government authorized licensees of ICT Services that provide Internet Access Services that have less than one hundred thousand (100,000) accesses to increase the value of their retail prices up to seven percent (7%) ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Axel Kicillof, announced the extension until 2 in the morning of the night restriction for activities in the district, which weeks ago had been reduced to 1 am. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Industry production grew by 4.9% year-on-year in December, which was the highest increase since February 2018. Food and beverages ended up with a rise of just 0.2% compared to 2019. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Minister of Health made a virtual presentation before a health committee of the House of Representatives about the National Vaccination Plan against the coronavirus designed by the national government. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The economy ministry reported that tax collection during January reached \$772,860 million pesos, with a year-on-year growth of 46.6%, encouraged by the export sector and the higher level of activity. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Government announced the launch of the telemedicine platform for PAMI affiliates and a line of soft credits for doctors of that health care for the acquisition of computers, with the aim of facilitating access to technology to provide services virtually. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** At the national level, INDEC reported that clothing and footwear production reached increases of 60%, above recreation and culture and food and beverages. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 9,550,301 cases of COVID-19, 232,248 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Jair Bolsonaro ordered the Minister of Civil House Braga Netto to articulate complementary actions in support of the States and the Federal District that need help in combating the covid-19. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** All residents of the city of Serrana in São Paulo over 18 years old will be vaccinated against the covid-19, as they are part of a research project of the Butantan Institute, which will send enough doses to vaccinate the 45,844 inhabitants of the municipality. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Fraud attempts rose 53.6% in 2020 compared to 2019, pointed out the latest Fraud Map, released on Monday (8). The increase came in the wake of social isolation in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and the consequent migration to digital channels. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Health Secretariat of Manaus has ten days to respond if it has been pressured by the Ministry of Health to treat covid-19 patients with hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Senator Rodrigo Pacheco extended for 60 days the Provisional Measure that frees R\$ 228 million for actions to face the crisis caused by the coronavirus with the objective of enabling access to food for indigenous people. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Ministry of Health reduces by 76% the number of covid beds financed with federal funds in SP. Drop in support to states and municipalities is due to lack of budget planning. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The President of the Chamber of Deputies, Arthur Lira, indicated that emergency aid to the most vulnerable population in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic can be repaid exceptionally until more resources are available to vote on a new socioeconomic project. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** According to the Brazilian Association of Events (Abrafesta), this sector, as one of the most affected at the beginning of Covid-19, registered a 95% drop in national revenue in 2020. However, it found a way to capital recovery in the online modality and led technology companies to grow up to 400% in live streaming services. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The second wave of covid-19 in Manaus (AM), much more serious than the first in 2020, destabilized the production of the Zona Franca industry at the beginning of the year, at a time when the factories were in full swing. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 229,187 cases of COVID-19, 10,932 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Legislative Assembly approved the Sanitary Emergency Law, despite the rejection of doctors and observations raised on its content by opposition legislators. The law prohibits strikes and work stoppages in the medical sector, and was contested by the Bolivian medical association. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The health sector stops for 48 hours, they call for measures to stop the contagion of COVID-19 and protect the population next week, in the absence of effective measures by the authorities. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Peru, Panama, and Bolivia are the economies with the greatest economic 'rebound' in 2021. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** In Cochabamba, there are more than 4 thousand restaurants, most of them generate higher profits on Sundays. Therefore, they ask the Departmental Council "not to kill the gastronomic capital" and allow home delivery. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The increase in the values of some agricultural products pushes the sector to sustained growth, due to a constant rise in recent months> Anapo asked the authorities not to distort the domestic market with values lower than those registered worldwide. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** It is estimated that virtual education excludes 40% of students. In La Paz and El Alto, there is a lack of conditions, collapse of platforms, and lack of internet connection, in addition to the lack of devices such as cell phones and computers. Students are forced to attend internet cafes. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Electronic banking is promoted by the National Tax Service in Bolivia, with payments and digital records recognized by the Financial System Supervisory Authority. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The director of the Covax mechanism in charge of Latin America explained that the AstraZeneca/Oxford and Pfizer vaccines will arrive in the first half of this year. Pfizer vaccines would arrive between February and March, while AstraZeneca's in the first half. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The economic crisis caused a decrease of 11 percent in the national industry in 2020, so this sector asks the Government for urgent measures such as promoting the purchase of goods and services, creating a fund of credits and state guarantees for companies, fighting against smuggling, modernizing labor standards and work arrangements, among others. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 751,886 cases of COVID-19, 18,794 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Sebastián Piñera began the mass COVID-19 vaccination process in the country. This plan prioritized more than 5 million people considered risky due to their health and age. The vaccine administered is Sinovac (two doses). ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Several municipalities advanced during the week to phase 3 of the Step-by-Step plan, and the managers of parks and restaurants of the Metropolitan Region made a positive balance of its reopening. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** An Ipsos study held in 28 countries revealed that Chile is the country that most increased e-commerce use in the pandemic: 59% of the Chileans consulted use "more than before" the digital platforms to buy. Further behind is United Kingdom (55%) and Turkey and South Korea (54%). ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Ministry of Education ratified an eventual voluntary return to face-to-face classes on Monday, March 1st, and published a complete protocol with more than 15 sanitary measures for schools and school grounds in the country. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Consumer Price Index revealed that food has risen in price in recent months. In January 2021, the greatest increases were in food and non-alcoholic beverages (1.2%), highlighting the lemon (54.3%) and potatoes (9.0%), while legumes, vegetables and tubers rose by 5.2%. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health reported that COVID-19 cases in the country decreased by 11% in the last week and more than 600,000 people have been vaccinated in recent days with the start of the mass vaccination campaign the last week. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Employment Subsidies achieve almost 500,000 requests in four months of operation, an increase of 44% compared to the subsidy launched in the first three months of the pandemic. The benefit is added to the new "Protege" subsidy, which will support the employment of mothers and fathers with children under two years. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Chilean telemedicine was consolidated in 2020 due to the pandemic and reached 73.5% of medical consultations, according to the Digital Hospital of the public sector, available since 2018. In the private sector, meanwhile, more than 100,000 medical dates were made online. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Chilean researcher developed a method to genetically identify fruit trees in a short time using the PCR test, which is used mainly in the health sector to identify COVID-19. The technique is similar to human paternity tests but applied to plants. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2,166,904 cases of COVID-19, 56,507 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Iván Duque announced the death of Nelson Darío Hurtado, alias "Marihuano", the second man in command of the Clan del Golfo. The operation was commanded by the Military Forces and the Police. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Bogotá went from red alert to orange due to a decrease in the occupancy of ICU beds, infections, and deaths by COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to IBM and Oxford Economics, technological impact, macroeconomic factors, and training are the top priorities for Colombian CEOs. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Gerson Bermont, Director of Promotion and Prevention of the Ministry of Health, said that pharmacovigilance is a fundamental task in the COVID-19 vaccination plan. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Pepsi and Postobón created the "Crece Tu Negocio" platform to support restaurants and bakeries. The platform offers training on sales increases, enhancing business opportunities, relationship with the environment, defining business objectives, and business digitalization. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Street dwellers were included in the COVID-19 vaccination plan. They were included in the second phase, the fourth stage, of the plan. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Deputy Minister of Finance, Juan Alberto Londoño, announced that the Government will negotiate the sale of ISA (public energy company) exclusively with Ecopetrol. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** According to the National Spectrum Agency (ANE), the advancement in 5G technology is the main digital challenge of 2021. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Kimberly-Clark will invest US\$ 80 million in Colombia to improve its manufacturing capacity at the company's production plants. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 259,783 cases of COVID-19, 15,086 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Candidate Andrés Arauz, an ally of former President Rafael Correa, was the most voted and went on to the second round of the presidential elections. The second position in the elections has not yet been defined. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Health Secretary of Quito, Ximena Abarca, said that a second wave of COVID-19 infections is likely in the city due to a permanent increase in infections. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to the Ecuadorian Chamber of Electronic Commerce, electronic commerce reached \$2.3 billion in 2020; a growth of \$ 700 million (43.75%) compared to 2019. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** According to the president Lenin Moreno, the Government will give a bonus of 200 dollars to the medical personnel of the first line in the fight against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Restaurants in Ecuador are being robbed through fake digital payment scams. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Minister of Health, Juan Carlos Zevallos, attended the Attorney General's Office for the investigation against him for an alleged influence peddling in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The director of the Western Hemisphere of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Alejandro Werner, said that the IMF is willing to renegotiate the financial agreement with Ecuador with the new president. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Ramón Valdiviezo, representative of the Trade Union of Technology Producers of Ecuador, stated that 86% of televisions in Ecuador are sold from national production. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to The Economist, Ecuador is in the group of States with an enough COVID-19 vaccination coverage at the end of 2022. Thus, Ecuador will have an effective economic recovery of productive sectors until then. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 1,932,145 cases of COVID-19; 166,200 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) reappeared on his daily morning conference after recovering from COVID-19. He said that he will not be wearing a facemask despite his recent illness. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mexico City is the only state in the country with over 70% occupancy of ICU beds with ventilators. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Senator Ricardo Monreal has presented the topics that will be covered on his bill proposal to regulate social media through an autonomous government agency. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** It has been almost one month without receiving the Pfizer vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to Food Tech Mexico, 21% of Mexican consumers agree that, due to the pandemic, Mexicans need to eat less products of animal origin. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health has announced that there are currently more people vaccinated than active cases of COVID-19 in the country, which was heavily criticized. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The International Monetary Fund shared that Mexico destined 0.7% of its GDP to the current health emergency while, on average, countries on LATAM used 4% of their GDP. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** In 2020, technology companies were more attractive to investors in Mexico than internet and fintech companies. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The light vehicle industry in Mexico reported a decrease in production of 15% during January 2021, compared to January of last year. ([Source](#))



# COVID-19 PULSE – PUBLIC AFFAIRS LATAM

Tuesday, February 02– Monday, February 08, 2021

Paraguay



**STATS:** 138,945 cases of COVID-19, 2,846 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The President of the Republic, Mario Abdo Benítez, appointed Juan Manuel Brunetti Marcos as Minister of Information and Communication Technologies. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The President, Mario Abdo Benítez, announced that the National Development Bank once again had the support of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) of the World Bank to Paraguay and will finance productive projects. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Within the framework of the PROINNOVA Program, the National Council of Science and Technology - CONACYT will invest 1,132,802,281 guaranies in 6 (six) innovation projects that will provide solutions to various areas. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Ministry of Health, in coordination with other institutions, is developing the necessary work to ensure the reception, distribution and storage of the first vaccines against covid-19. The start of vaccination is estimated from the second half of February. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Within the framework of the law to support popular pots, the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) delivered more than 7,000 kilos of non-perishable food for some 1,200 people who were affected by the overflow of streams in the Tobatí area, in the department of Cordillera. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Finance reported that the Ministry of Public Health currently has 230 million dollars of COVID-19 funds to face the pandemic, such as the acquisition of medicines for hospitalized patients. This amount corresponds to part of the 1.6-billion-dollar loan that the Government made to combat the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Inflation for the month of January 2021, measured by the variation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 0.5%. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Government, through the National Secretariat for Youth and the National Telecommunications Commission, delivered 200 Notebooks to 7 university institutions dependent on the National University of Ñeembucú. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Exports under the Maquila Regime registered during the month of January 2021 amount to 73,925,611 dollars, which represents an increase of 33% in relation to the same period of the previous year. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 1,191,221 cases of COVID-19, 42,467 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government approved a budget increase of S/ 3,108 millions to face the rebound in COVID-19 cases that have been occurring since January. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Given the strong increase in COVID-19 cases in Puno, and in the provinces of Maynas and Ramón Castilla in Loreto, the Government has resolved to incorporate these areas into those considered as extreme risk, for which they entered quarantine on Monday, February 8. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Executive published the law approved by the Congress of the Republic that automatically and obligatorily creates a savings account in the Banco de la Nación with the number of National Identity Document (DNI) ("Cuenta DNI") of citizens. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Government reported that doctors and nurses from the Archbishop Loayza Hospital were the first to be immunized with the Sinopharm vaccines. The President of the Republic, Francisco Sagasti, will be the first high official of the State to receive this vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** President Francisco Sagasti assured that they are working on streamlining the FAE-Agro, a business financing program that has only held three auctions to date. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The coordinator of the COVID-19 vaccination team of the Minsa, Nancy Olivares, reported that on Monday 08 the distribution of the 300,000 doses of the vaccine from the Chinese laboratory of Sinopharm to 13 hospitals and health institutes located in Lima and Callao, to in order to protect personnel in critical areas fighting the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Sunat provided that any taxpayer who obtained third category income of up to 2,300UIT in 2020 may extend the declaration and payment of the monthly taxes corresponding to January 2021 for one month, provided that said company is in a region classified as of very high or extreme alert level. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (Midagri) delivered tablets to the regional government of Tumbes in order to generate statistical information on the agricultural dynamics of the department, through the implementation and access to digital platforms. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Indecopi is conducting a cycle of free virtual talks to micro and small companies (mypes) to protect their innovations. ([Source](#))



STATS: 45,311 cases of COVID-19, 490 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Lacalle Pou met with his Brazilian counterpart Jair Bolsonaro, on his first official trip since he took the Chair in March 2020. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Executive Branch established that those who are going to be vaccinated against the Covid-19 must sign an informed consent. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Uruguay is the second-best country in Latin America to invest, in part due to the strong advance towards the digital economy, according to a study. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** The Coronavirus in Uruguay registered a marked decrease in infections in recent days and without departments in the red zone. [\(Source\)](#)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Referents of the gastronomic sector express themselves on what the coup of the COVID-19 is meaning in the sector. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** The latest epidemiological reports from the Ministry of Public Health show that the pace of contact tracing has been improved. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** The Ministry of Economy and Finance presented Uruguay's macroeconomic performance and prospects. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Coronavirus UY app will ensure your identity when you get vaccinated against covid-19. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries will request priority vaccination for workers in the food export sector. [\(Source\)](#)