

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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**STATS:** 2,029,057 cases of COVID-19, 50,327 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Alberto Fernandez closed the meeting of the Federal Council of Education (CFE) that analysed the return to classes in schools with special protocols due to the coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The House of Representatives enacted the public debt sustainability project, which establishes that financing agreements with any international organization must be approved by a law of the National Congress. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Ministers of Productive Development and of Science and Technology, presented a series of measures to promote the Knowledge Economy sector. The chambers also presented a 10-year expansion plan aimed at creating more than 500,000 jobs and US\$10 billion in exports. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** 400,000 new doses of the Sputnik V vaccine arrived in the country from Moscow, Russia, which will allow the vaccination campaign against COVID-19 to continue throughout the country. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The National Institute of Statistics and Census (Indec) reported that the Consumer Price Index (CPI-Cost of Living) increased 4% during January, due to increases of 15.1% in the communications sector, from 5.4 % in hotels and restaurants, and 4.8% in food and beverages. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Through a Resolution published in the official bulletin, the Ministry of Health approved the list of "Uncommon Diseases". There are almost 6 thousand diseases that suffer a minimum number of patients worldwide. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Government rushes the multi-year economic plan before May to reach an agreement with the IMF. The initiative will be presented in Congress and it will include reserves, deficit and inflation targets. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The House of Representatives approved the bill for the Financing of the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation, establishing the progressive and sustained increase of the national budget for the sector until reaching 1% of GDP by 2032. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The industry's installed capacity utilization level (ICU) stood at 58.4%, becoming the highest level for the month of December since 2017. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 9,833,9651 cases of COVID-19, 239,294 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry

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**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Jair Bolsonaro said it was "no use crying at home" on the day that Brazil recorded 1,452 deaths from the new coronavirus in 24 hours, the highest number since July. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** No Carnival and now no more vaccines. The mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes (DEM), said this Monday morning (15) that the immunization campaign against Covid-19 in the city will be interrupted due to the lack of immunizing doses. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The new coronavirus pandemic changed the way Brazilians pay their bills and purchases. And the expectation is that the use of credit, debit and prepaid cards will continue to grow and exceed R \$ 2.3 trillion in 2021, an increase of 20% compared to 2020. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** This Sunday (14), Brazil recorded the highest moving average of deaths by Covid-19 of the entire pandemic of the new coronavirus: there were 1,105 deaths per day in the last week. Until then, the highest average was 1,097 deaths, recorded on July 25, 2020. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Brazilian Association of Supermarkets, ABRAS, believes that due to social isolation measures, Brazilians have changed their habits, increasing consumption at home. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health has at least 1.5 million chloroquine tablets to treat Covid, although the drug has not been proven effective against the disease. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The re-creation of the emergency aid will serve more people than originally planned. According to estimates by the economic team, the program is expected to reach more than 40 million individuals in 2021. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** As part of coping with the global coronavirus-related crisis in the past year, updates to the population care system have been driven by health innovations. In Brazil, the kick-off took place with the authorization to use telemedicine, a law enacted in April last year. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** In addition to syringes and vaccines, producers and the industry of other medical supplies, such as cotton, necessary for the application of doses, alert to the possibility of product price hikes if there is no planning to meet demand. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 236,732 cases of COVID-19, 11,249 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Bolivian government announced the reduction of wages and salaries in the public sector to contribute to public investment. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Mayor's Office of Santa Cruz has a rigid quarantine for the three days of Carnival, this measure should be assumed because it will help lower the contagion curve. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** SISEGUSA is chosen by KLIP XTREME as a new wholesale distributor for Bolivia. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** President Luis Arce confirmed the purchase of 400,000 doses of the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine and the donation of another 100,000. Immunization of personnel working in the health system, which exceeds 179,000, will be prioritized. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Sales in restaurants fell by 50% and in supermarkets by 13%. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** President Luis Arce announced that Bolivia will have 500,000 Sinopharm vaccines against COVID-19 before the end of the month for the start of mass and free vaccination, as a result of good bilateral relations with the Government of China. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Vice Ministry of Tourism and representatives of the tourism operating chain of Rurrenabaque, Beni and San Buenaventura, and La Paz, established an action plan for the economic reactivation and recovery of this sector, which was affected by the coronavirus pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The virtual platform, *Propaganda Inteligente* (Smart Propaganda), seeks to reduce the expenses of political campaigns and environmental impact, providing an equal space for all candidates in the digital world. The project began its efforts in 2016, in Chile, and today it is committed to positioning itself in Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Chile and Colombia. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Microentrepreneurs in metal mechanics denounced the rise in the price of iron for construction. He regretted that no government entity has spoken out on the matter. He gave as an example that an iron bar that cost 15 Bolivianos now costs twice as much. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 779,541 cases of COVID-19, 19,624 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Sebastián Piñera was vaccinated against COVID-19 with the CoronaVac vaccine from the Sinovac laboratory and assured that the injection "is safe and effective" to face the pandemic. The President will receive the second dose on March 12. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Police reported that more than 60 cars were rejected by random health checks carried out by the police on the main exit routes in Santiago. The reasons are not having the required documentation or going to cities that are in quarantine. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** According to Kawésqar Lab, digital consumers increased their frequency of online purchases during the last quarter of 2020 due to the pandemic: 3 of 10 transactions were made through the physical channel and the rest were online. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Almost two million Chileans over the age of 70, and the health, security and Armed Forces professionals, have been vaccinated against COVID-19. This week, the vaccination schedule includes people over 65 and education professionals. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Despite predicting a significant drop in sales due to the pandemic, wine business maintained the export levels of 2019 with shipments of 53 million boxes and sales of US\$1,467.5 million. Also, the companies aspire to grow between 2% and 3% in 2021 ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** Six provinces of the country decreased its percentages of positivity for COVID-19 in PCR tests during the last 24 hours and another six maintained its numbers. Meanwhile, the variation of new confirmed cases at the national level is -2% and -14% in last 7 and last 14 days. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** A study revealed that one in five workers in Chile would agree to work longer hours for the same pay, since there is still a pessimistic work scenario due to the pandemic. The research also concluded that 47% of those surveyed prefer a mix between home office and face-to-face work. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Digital banking will continue its growth in 2021, after exceeding one billion transactions in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the 90% increase in online transactions last year, card payments doubled in merchant sales. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Due to mandatory quarantines, different economic sectors have raised their production costs with a shortage of labor. The trades that most demand human resources are bricklayers and carpenters, among others. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 2,207,701 cases of COVID-19, 58,134 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Gilberto Toro, the executive director of the Federation of Municipalities, proposed to unify the elections of President, Mayors and Congressmen. Thus, the presidency of Iván Duque should be extended 2 more years. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mayoralty of Bogotá issued the Decree 049 of 2021, which established the Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 in Bogotá. The Decree presents the technical and operational guidelines for vaccination in the city. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Microsoft, Movistar Empresas, Zinobe, and other 30 companies are supporting the micro, small and medium-sized companies of Colombia with technological tools and access to financing. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Colombia started the National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 with Pfizer vaccine in Sincelejo city. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Colombian Association of the Gastronomic Industry (ACODRES) mentioned that the restaurant sector presented losses of \$ 215,000 million pesos in January 2021. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Colombia will reach 240,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines the next weekend. 50,000 from Pfizer (February 16) and 192,000 from Sinovac. (February 20). ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** According to the DANE, GDP growth in Colombia was -6.8% in 2020. The mining and quarrying (-19.4%), construction (-27.7%), and trade (-6.6%) sectors fell the most. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The cybersecurity company ESET announced a series of attacks in Colombia by 'Operation Spalax': some cyberattacks against government institutions and private companies, mainly from the energy and metallurgical sectors. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to the DANE, the coronavirus pandemic generated a fall of -7.8% in the industrial production sector and -8% in the commerce sector. ([Source](#))



STATS: 268,219 cases of COVID-19, 15,394 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The National Electoral Council (CNE) suspended the vote-counting session for the election of the second candidate for the second round of the presidential elections. President Lenin Moreno expressed his concern. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The rural areas of Quito suffer an increase in COVID-19 cases. The increase of infections is greater than 20%, while the city average is 17%. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** In Ecuador, contactless payments have grown in the last year. Produbanco, in alliance with Visa and Mastercard, has incorporated contactless payment solutions through mobile applications, digital wallets, and functions that allow the telephone to be brought closer to a payment terminal to carry out transactions. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** On February 11, 2021, 1,962 frontline workers and seniors received the second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Guayaquil restaurants reject schedules for alcohol sales; nightly billing represents 70% of income. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health published the vaccine arrival schedule: 17,500 doses the last week of February; 30,000 the first week, 38,000 the second week, 26,000 the third week, and 30,000 the last week of March; 39,700 doses will arrive each week in April. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Ecuador needs USD 12,450 million to cover financial obligations in 2021. Financing sources are not enough to cover these expenses. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Ricardo González, general manager of Latinnova, makes a diagnosis of the innovative ecosystem in Ecuador. He stated that local entrepreneurs should focus on niche markets and connect with financing platforms. According to him, Ecuador is a country of entrepreneurs but with little innovation. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** 1,736 people have been hired under the new 4 work modalities in Ecuador: productive, tourist/cultural, entrepreneurship, and youth contract. There are 87 contracts in the tourist/cultural work modality, based on sectors accommodation activities, administrative services, manufacturing industries, and transportation. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 1,995,892 cases of COVID-19; 174,657 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) suggested that the COVID-19 vaccine that is being developed in Mexico, should be named *Patria* (homeland in Spanish). ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Mexico City and the State of Mexico have returned to orange in the epidemiological traffic light system, allowing the capacity and hours in restaurants and shops to be expanded. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Different CSOs in the country have signed a petition to discuss the proposed legislation by Senator Ricardo Monreal to regulate social media platforms as they find the proposal problematic. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Ebrard, Mexico will file a complaint with the United Nations against countries that monopolize vaccine producers, such as the United States or members of the European Union. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to Chedraui, one of the largest supermarkets in the country, there has been a change in yoghurt consumption due to the new labeling norm; meanwhile, the portfolio of products such as chocolates, ice cream and cookies has not presented major changes. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The vaccination of people over 60 years old has begun in 333 municipalities across the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The National Occupation and Employment Survey (ENOE, for its Spanish acronym) recorded a decrease of 1.7 million people in the economically active population, which went from 57.6 million to 55.9 million. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The number of job vacancies for tech positions that are offered in Mexico, many of which come from the United States, grew by 1,551% compared to 2019 thanks to the possibility of remote work. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** According to the Center for Economic Studies of the Private Sector, the current protectionist policies in the United States could affect Mexican exports and investment in different sectors of the country. ([Source](#))





**STATS:** 145,095 cases of COVID-19, 2,953 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The president, Mario Abdo Benítez, appointed Teresita Dejesús Álvarez Ramírez as the new executive director of the National Directorate of Defense, Health and Animal Welfare, replacing Juan Manuel Enciso Denis. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Executive enacted Law No. 6556/2020, which exempts people with disabilities from paying the passage in collective land transport that could benefit 7,000 people throughout the country. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The President of Paraguay, Mario Abdo Benítez, announced that on February 20, GuaraníSat-1, the first Paraguayan satellite developed with the support of Japan, will be launched into space. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Minister of Health, Julio Mazzoleni, gave a detailed report on the National Vaccination Plan against Covid-19 to parliamentarians during the session of the Permanent Commission of the National Congress. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Government, with financing from the Yacyretá Binational Entity (EBY), distributed a total of 6,608 basic food kits to peasant and social organizations in the department of Misiones. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** With the presence of the Head of State, Mario Abdo Benítez, 4 new Family Health Units (USF) were enabled in the department of Alto Paraná. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The national economy achieved growth of 0.9% in December, this increase was seen in the sectors of construction, livestock and manufacturing. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** In the Palace of Justice, a telecentre with access to the internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) was enabled, part of a project to enable more similar spaces in judicial districts and courts. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Total exports in January 2021 have reached a value of 764.1 million dollars, 15% less than the 898.6 million dollars accumulated in January of the previous year, according to the report released by the Central Bank of Paraguay (BCP). ([Source](#))



**STATS: 1,238,501 cases of COVID-19, 43,880 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government made official, through a supreme decree, the extension of the total quarantine until February 28 in 32 provinces classified as extreme risk by coronavirus. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The use of the beaches, rivers, lakes and lagoons will continue to be restricted until February 28 as part of the measures to prevent infections by coronavirus. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The use of electronic invoicing is growing in the country, considering the benefits it implies and because since January 1, 2022 all firms, including micro-enterprises, are required to use them, as required by Sunat. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Óscar Ugarte Ubilluz is the new Health Minister since Pilar Mazzetti Soler resigned from the office on the night of Friday, February 12. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Given the extension of the quarantine, restaurants and stores will continue to deliver their products via delivery, an option that seeks to help face the difficult situation they are going through. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** On Saturday, February 13, the second batch of 700,000 vaccines against COVID-19 from the Chinese laboratory Sinopharm arrived in Peru, as announced by the President of the Republic, Francisco Sagasti. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Central Reserve Bank of Peru (BCRP) confirmed that it is evaluating with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) the approval of a reprogramming scheme for loans granted through *Reactiva Perú* (Reactivate Peru). ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Health (Minsa) developed a mobile application so that everyone can know the progress in the process of distribution, application and monitoring of vaccines throughout the country in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Peruvian government created the Business Support Program for Micro and Small Enterprises (PAE-Mype), which will have a fund of 2,000 million soles to promote the financing of working capital for up to 36 months. ([Source](#))

# COVID-19 PULSE – PUBLIC AFFAIRS LATAM

Tuesday, February 09– Monday, February 15, 2021

Uruguay



STATS: 48,725 cases of COVID-19, 546 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Executive Power will review the entry protocol to the country for Uruguayans vaccinated against Covid-19. (Source)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The mayor of Soriano requested more extensive reports about the coronavirus in the different cities of the Department. (Source)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Uruguay was listed as the second-best country in Latin America to start an online business. (Source)



**[COVID RELATED]** Vaccination against Covid-19 will take place from Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. throughout the country. (Source)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Cold Chambers close as a precaution against the appearance of positive cases of Covid-19. (Source)



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Public Health and educational institutions offer serological tests to health personnel to find out if they have had coronavirus. (Source)



**[ECONOMY]** Members of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economy jointly analysed actions to promote foreign trade. (Source)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Social Security Bank (BPS) will present digital access to the main data of the body. (Source)



**[MANUFACTURING]** Covid-19 struck another blow to industrial production that fell for the sixth year in a row. (Source)