

# COVID-19 PULSE

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

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**STATS:** 2,154,694 cases of COVID-19, 53,121 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Within the framework of International Women's Day, President Alberto Fernández led the signing of the commitment act "Federal Agreement for a United Argentina against gender violence" together with the governors. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Axel Kicillof, presented the "Comprá más Cerca" program that seeks to "take care of people's pockets". ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** 88% of SMEs affirm that the pandemic digitized their companies, while 74% believe that they will continue with the acquisition and implementation of new technologies after the pandemic. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** During this week, all the provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires will begin to receive a total of 375,805 doses of the second component of the Sputnik V vaccine in order to complete the vaccination schedules. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Inflation during the month of February in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires was 4.39% in the food basket. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Minister of Health of the Nation, Carla Vizzotti, led a meeting to begin to outline a plan to reinforce the care of non-COVID pathologies in the pandemic context ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Minister of Economy, Martín Guzmán, will travel to Washington in the second half of March with his sights set on being able to negotiate an agreement with the IMF with more accessible conditions. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The president of the National Agency for the Promotion of Research, Technological Development and Innovation, Fernando Peirano, visited Rosario together with officials from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of the Nation and CONICET to strengthen the links between national, provincial and local science and technology actors. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Sales in retail stores fell 6.5% in February compared to the same month of 2020. So far this year, they have accumulated a decrease of 6.1% year-on-year. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 11,125,017 cases of COVID-19, 268,568 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry

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**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The presidents of the Chamber of Deputies, Arthur Lira, and the Senate, Rodrigo Pacheco, asked Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello to inform about the vaccination schedule within 24 hours. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Supreme Federal Court (STF) formed a majority on Friday (5) to extend, while the Covid-19 pandemic lasts, the authorization for governors and mayors to determine measures to combat the coronavirus. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Investments in fintechs and startups should reach new heights. The expectation is that the “new normal” brought by the coronavirus pandemic will drive the creation of new technological businesses and partnerships with large banks and companies. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** The number of people vaccinated against covid-19 in Brazil reached this Saturday, 6, at 8,736,891, according to data gathered by the consortium of press vehicles. The number represents 4.13% of the total population. [\(Source\)](#)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Abia (Brazilian Food Industry Association) released a note warning of the risk of food shortages in the event of interruptions in the sector's production. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** At least 11 indications, which can be used as evidence, reinforce that the summit of the Ministry of Health had previous knowledge about the severe shortage of oxygen in hospitals in Manaus and was silent on the scale of the problem. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** The Chamber of Deputies approved in the first round the text of the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) that recreates emergency aid to vulnerable people. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** Accelerated digital transformation during the Covi-19 pandemic boosts the Information Technology sector. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Productivity in Industry survey, from the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), shows that labor productivity in the Brazilian manufacturing industry decreased 0.6% in 2020 compared to 2019. [\(Source\)](#)



**STATS:** 254,736 cases of COVID-19, 11,867 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government approved Supreme Decree 4470, which creates a trust of Bs 150 million through the Guarantee Fund for the Development of the National Industry (Fogadin), with the aim of promoting the reactivation of the national productive sector and the substitution of imports. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Vice Minister of Defense of User and Consumer Rights, Jorge Silva, reported that he held a meeting with the Telecommunications and Transportation Supervision Authority (ATT), in order to evaluate internet service rates in the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** One year after the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in Bolivia, about 50% of the country's tourism-related businesses closed and, despite the relaxation of quarantine measures, there is still no date for the reactivation of the sector. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Vaccination against COVID-19 will be carried out in 812 health centers, posts, second-level establishments and two hospital complexes in the department of La Paz, according to the Departmental Health Service (Sedes). ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Association of Oilseed and Wheat Producers (Anapo) carried out version 27 of Exposoya, which for the first time was developed virtually, with the support of the Municipal Government of Cuatro Cañadas in the department of Santa Cruz. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The National Institute for Agricultural and Forestry Innovation (Iniaf) socialized rice production technologies under irrigated and rainfed conditions in the San José del Norte community, in the municipality of San Pedro in the department of Santa Cruz. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Dinki is a safe and cheap transportation option, it is a Bolivian transport service application that has a very important plus: it also has insurance against accidents to driver and passengers and already operates in several capitals of Bolivia. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Departmental Health Service (Headquarters) received the second shipment from China Sinopharm, with which they reach a total of 145 thousand doses. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Textile firm Textilón bets on the national market. The company arose in La Paz but since 2000 it faced an expansion process and in the future they plan to reach other countries in addition to Peru. ([Source](#))



**STATS:** 860,533 cases of COVID-19, 21,163 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** Sebastián Piñera officially began the 2021 school year in an activity in which he shared with elementary school students who had not seen each other for more than a year, as a result of the pandemic. With strict sanitary protocols, the President stressed that the return will be gradual, safe, voluntary and flexible ([Source](#)).



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** At least five schools in the Metropolitan Region decided to suspend face-to-face classes after registering COVID-19 cases just one week after starting the school year. Students from these institutions will must connect to online classes next weeks ([Source](#)).



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** In an unprecedented format, the celebrations that are organized annually in these months in the wine sector as a result of the grape harvest, will be held in digital format to avoid COVID-19 infections. The idea is to take advantage of the arrival of this industry to e-commerce ([Source](#)).



**[COVID RELATED]** According to the Department of Statistics and Health Information, the total number of people vaccinated against COVID-19 in Chile reaches 4,041,536, of which 551,485 correspond to people who completed their vaccination schedule, receiving both doses ([Source](#)).



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Cherry growers asked to expand export markets and raise the quality of this fruit, after a weak season in China, due to rumors of findings of COVID-19 in cherries boxes. The campaign promised record sales; however, sales and prices fell ([Source](#)).



**[HEALTH]** Health Ministry reported that Chile registered a total of 63,583 PCR tests during the last 24 hours, one of the highest figures so far this year, totaling almost 10 million tests to date. According to the registry, the positivity of the exams at the national level is 8.19% ([Source](#)).



**[ECONOMY]** Sebastián Piñera announced an increase in subsidies to hire and reinstate workers and the extension of protection for suspended employees until June 2021, in order to protect and create jobs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic ([Source](#)).



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The owners of kiosks and small stores have had to implement initiatives to increase their sales in the midst of the pandemic, using, among other tools, WhatsApp with their customers. They also received financial support from the Government and were trained in digital marketing ([Source](#)).



**[MANUFACTURING]** Chilean company Deysa Care presented the new Diamant NanoCoat, a face mask capable of eliminating 99% of viruses and bacteria, including COVID-19, which are in the outer layer of the product. The national manufacturing hopes to compete with the Chinese industry in the manufacture of these implements ([Source](#)).



STATS: 2,290,539 cases of COVID-19, 60,858 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Government and the Ministry of Defense ordered the bombing of the alias Gentil Duarte's (member of the FARC dissidents) camp. As collateral damage, at least 12 minors died in the strike. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The controversy is growing because Carolina Cárdenas (a contractor at the Subred Norte) was vaccinated against COVID-19 in Bogotá, but she was not inside the prioritized population. The Minister of Health Fernando Ruiz criticized this case. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** Colombia's fiscal deficit increases the pressure to seek greater sources and the possibilities of promoting private taxes on big tech as Facebook and Google grow. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** President Iván Duque announced that Colombia looks to produce COVID-19 vaccines. According to Duque, French President Emmanuel Macron will support this aim. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Colombian restaurants ask for help through Change.org. The Colombian Association of the Gastronomic Industry, Acodres, launched a campaign calling for no more restaurant closings and that service be allowed in establishments. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** Colombia began the second stage of vaccination of health personnel and the elderly through Resolution 303 of March 6. This stage includes second-line medical personnel and people over 60 years of age. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** In February, according to the DANE, inflation was 0.64%. This figure is lower than February 2020 one, when it was 0.67%. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** According to Jaime Ramírez, director of Mercado Libre for the Andean Region, the company will open a new technology, innovation, and product center in Medellín, Colombia. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The president of the National Association of Colombian Entrepreneurs (Andi), Bruce Mac Master, reported that between 2000 and 2020, Colombia has received US\$197,862 million from foreign direct investment (FDI). The manufacturing sector received 15.8%. ([Source](#))



STATS: 297,957 cases of COVID-19, 16,128 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its "strongly" protest to the Argentine Foreign Ministry over President Alberto Fernández's statement when an interviewer asked him about his disagreements with his vice president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** ICU beds in Quito hospitals remain saturated; the outflow of COVID-19 patients with the medical discharge has decreased. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Ministry of Production, the Ecuadorian Chamber of Electronic Commerce (CECE), and the Ecuadorian Chamber of Innovation and Technology (CITE) launched the National Strategy for Electronic Commerce. It is focused on 4 main pillars: legal framework, MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), payment and security systems; and e-commerce process. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The fifth shipment of COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Ecuador: 73,710 doses from the Pfizer laboratory. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, the opening of restaurants is related to the increase in COVID-19 infections and deaths. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health announced an investigation for COVID-19 vaccination of two people who would not belong to the health personnel of the Teodoro Maldonado Carbo hospital of the IESS. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** Inter-American Development Bank approved financing for USD 263 million for Ecuador to purchase vaccines and to promote employment. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Government of Ecuador will install a submarine cable to improve the connection with the Galapagos. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Chevrolet expands its local offer of SUV vehicles (sports utility vehicles). In 2020, according to the Association of Automotive Companies of Ecuador (Aeade), 32,793 SUVs were placed in the country, surpassing the 28,545 units of the automobile segment. ([Source](#))



STATS: 2,137,884 cases of COVID-19; 191,789 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Andrés Manuel López Obrador wondered “where is the United Nations in all of this” while, according to him, some countries around the world overstock with the COVID-19 vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** Theaters of the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature (INBAL) will reopen within the framework of the program *Volver a verte*, which also includes the reopening of the Institute's network of museums under strict sanitary measures. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Digital Economy in the country grows by 2% per year and represents 5% of all economic activity in the country, according to the Minister of Treasury, Arturo Herrera. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** The Mexican government has already signed contracts for 140 million doses of the vaccine. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** According to Simón Barquera Cervera, director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health, the front labeling strategy in Mexico will help save \$1.8 billion USD, including \$742 million in indirect costs. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Health has reported that the National Vaccination Strategy has applied 3,100,868 doses against coronavirus in the country. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** According to the OECD, the Mexican economy will grow 4.5% during 2021, increasing its previous forecast of 3.6% growth made in December. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** According to a study by Endeavor Mexico, only 9% of technology companies in Mexico are headed by a woman and only 23% of these types of companies have a female co-founder. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** Only five states in the country (Colima, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Tabasco, and Durango) had positive increases in their level of manufacturing production. ([Source](#))





**STATS:** 169,860 cases of COVID-19, 3,343 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President, Mario Abdo Benítez, announced that he has made the decision to make changes in his cabinet, including in Health, Education, Women and the Civil Cabinet. This determination has the purpose of achieving pacification in the country and responding to the claims of the citizens. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** They presented the project "Rumbo a Asunción 2022" to be developed by the National Sports Secretariat (SND) and the Paraguayan Olympic Committee (COP), for the preparation of athletes for the South American Games. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The Financial Education Week will be held from March 8 to 13, the activity seeks to promote the culture of intelligent resource management by families. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** Paraguay continues to add towns and districts that declare a health emergency, especially in the interior of the country, where every day more positive cases and deaths from COVID-19 are registered. Encarnación and Iturbe joined this emergency, applying strong controls on the streets of their cities. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The Secretariat for the Defense of the Consumer and the User (Sedeco) took price samples of 60 products of the basic family basket offered in several supermarkets of the Central department and verified price increases. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** The Executive Power confirmed the appointment of Julio Borba as head of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare. Julio Borba affirmed that among his priorities is the management for the rapid arrival of more vaccines against COVID-19, as well as the provision of supplies and medicines. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** With January and February, the Undersecretariat of State for Taxation (SET) registered a total of 1,416,978 million guaraníes for Value Added Tax (VAT), which implies an increase of 3.7% compared to the same period from 2020. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (Mades) inaugurated the first reference air quality monitoring station in Paraguay, which will provide official data in real time and continuously. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The income generated by the exports of the pig complex showed an increase of 11.7% during the first two months of this 2021, since the currencies reached US \$ 1,486,706 compared to the shipments of the same months of 2020. ([Source](#))



**STATS: 1,371,176 cases of COVID-19, 47,854 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.**



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** The Ministry of Health (Minsa), through Ministerial Resolution No. 345-2021/MINSA, formalized the incorporation of people over 60 years of age in Phase I of the National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The Itinerant Platforms of Social Action (PIAS) will facilitate, by river and air, access to priority services of the State to more than 125,000 people in vulnerable situations, in 472 indigenous and rural communities in the regions of Loreto, Ucayali and Puno. ([Source](#))



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** The National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration (Sunat) simplified and virtualized the registry for the control of controlled chemical inputs in order to reduce costs and administrative burdens for users of these goods and promote compliance with their obligations. ([Source](#))



**[COVID RELATED]** As announced by the president of Francisco Sagasti, this Wednesday, March 3, the first batch of 50,000 vaccines against COVID-19 from the US laboratory Pfizer arrived to Peru. ([Source](#))



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** Agro Rural of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (Midagri) announced that, in coordination with local and regional governments, it will organize 26 editions of the Midagri Markets From the Farm to the Pot 2021 in 20 regions of the country. ([Source](#))



**[HEALTH]** On Monday, March 8, started the vaccination against COVID-19 for the elderly, but only for those who are cared for via the Essalud Home Care Program (Padomi); and also for the members of the Armed Forces and the National Police of Peru. ([Source](#))



**[ECONOMY]** The Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations, Silvia Loli, reported that a pension of 200 soles per month will be given to the person who is caring for infants who are orphans of one or both parents who died as a result of COVID-19. ([Source](#))



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion (MTPE) and the National Superintendency of Labor Inspection (Sunafil) made their tables of virtual parties available to the population as a way to prevent coronavirus infections and maintain attention to their users. ([Source](#))



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Executive Power established the rescheduling of loans guaranteed with the Business Support Fund for Micro and Small Businesses (FAE-Mype) in order to provide payment facilities to beneficiaries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Source](#))



STATS: 63,887 cases of COVID-19, 651 deceased, as confirmed by the Health Ministry.



**[EXECUTIVE POWER]** President Lacalle Pou attended Parliament where he took stock of the first year of his administration before the General Assembly, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. [\(Source\)](#)



**[LOCAL MEASURES]** The government is looking for mechanisms that allow the public to return to the shows and the reopening of the events sector. [\(Source\)](#)



**[DIGITAL ECONOMY]** E-commerce grew 50% in 2020 in Latin America, and in Uruguay, the impact of the coronavirus also caused an increase in purchases made through the internet. [\(Source\)](#)



**[COVID RELATED]** In the first week of inoculation, just over 70,000 doses were provided throughout the country. Only 16 had mild adverse effects. [\(Source\)](#)



**[FOOD AND BEVERAGE]** The growing problem of obesity in Uruguay and the complications of patients who suffer from the disease and contract the covid-19 virus. [\(Source\)](#)



**[HEALTH]** The Ministry of Public Health enabled vaccination for people within the age range that goes from 55 to 59 years as of Monday 8. [\(Source\)](#)



**[ECONOMY]** Inflation accelerated in February and reached a variation of 9.12% in the last 12 months. [\(Source\)](#)



**[TECHNOLOGY]** The Coronavirus Uy app is consolidated as the most used means by Uruguayans to access a date to receive the covid-19 vaccine. [\(Source\)](#)



**[MANUFACTURING]** The Uruguayan Chamber of Events (CEU) presented the document Proposals for the Reactivation of the Events Industry to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. [\(Source\)](#)