



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on July 1, 2016

UN Agency Joins With U.S. Firm to Internationalize Space Exploration

Someone at the United Nations is watching too much *Star Trek*.

In an apparent bid to get started on the United Federation of Planets before humanity has even become a multi-planet species, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has begun talks with Colorado-based Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) to provide an infrastructure giving the UN access to outer space. Sierra Nevada is the corporation that finds itself on the outside of the NASA contract playground, looking in at SpaceX and Boeing, two larger aerospace firms that won out in NASA's much-ballyhooed bidding war to convey American astronauts to low-earth orbit. SNC had invested millions of dollars in developing a space plane, resembling a mini-space shuttle, that could be launched atop a rocket and then glide back to earth, much as the space shuttle once did. In the end, though, NASA officials decided to go with more traditional booster and capsule configurations being developed by SpaceX and Boeing, and Sierra Nevada's Dream Chaser space plane (shown) — which had already been put through a number of flight tests — was seemingly left with no dreams to chase.



Enter the UN. With the help of UNOOSA, Sierra Nevada is now poised to begin developing the world's first multi-national space transportation system. [According to Observer.com's Robin Seemangal](#):

SNC and UNOOSA have signed an agreement to develop an Interface Control Document which will act as a general blueprint for connecting the spacecraft's engineering and software subsystems. The two parties will also develop a payload hosting guide that will help establish guidelines for countries to develop their own dedicated missions to low-Earth orbit.

Perhaps officials at the Vienna-based UNOOSA envision a coming day when astronauts and scientists from the likes of East Timor and Burkina Faso will be shuttled to infinity and beyond. No doubt the deal with Sierra Nevada is a bid for the United Nations to remain relevant in the new space race, which threatens to permit private citizens to have access to the Final Frontier without benign UN oversight.



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Whatever the case, the folks at Sierra Nevada are grateful that the United Nations has now given their hard-pressed company a way to live long and prosper.



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