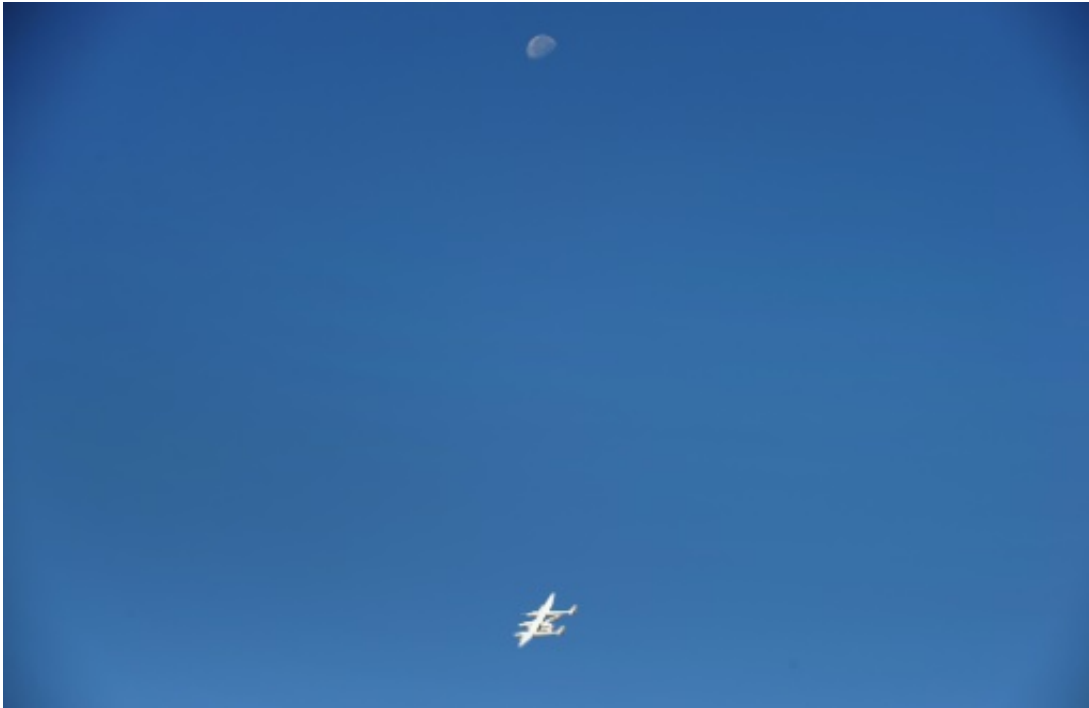


Space travel rules needed within five years: UN

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Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipOne was the first private spacecraft to reach the edge of space in 2004

The UN aviation agency called on Tuesday for regulations on space travel to be enacted within five years in order to bolster a burgeoning space tourism and transportation sector.

The International Civil Aviation Organization "recognizes that sub-

orbital and outer [space](#) flights will foster new tourism and transport markets, and that investments in related research and development remain at a very healthy level," ICAO Council President Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu said.

"Personally, as an engineer, I am very excited to see the dream and theory of normalized space flight now becoming such a tangible reality," he told an aerospace symposium in Abu Dhabi.

In making its case, the agency noted an uptick in the number of spacecraft designs that have made the leap from concept to reality, saying more will follow.

The ICAO also cited a steady increase in rocket ship launches, and commercial spaceports are now becoming "operational realities," the Montreal-based agency said in a statement.

Virgin Galactic, the [space tourism](#) company owned by British billionaire Richard Branson, last month unveiled a new commercial spaceship 16 months after its predecessor crashed, killing a pilot during a test flight.

The company's SpaceShipOne was the first private spacecraft to reach the edge of space in 2004.



Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, president of the council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), speaks at the Singapore Airshow Aviation Leadership Summit, in February 2016

Meanwhile, SpaceX, owned by another billionaire, Elon Musk, has successfully launched a communications satellite into a distant orbit, but failed to land the first stage of its Falcon 9 rocket on an ocean platform earlier this month.

Rules must be put in place soon to ensure safety and security in space, as well as prevent the creation of a patchwork of regulations by individual states, the ICAO said.

The agency suggested adapting the existing regulatory framework for aviation, for which the ICAO and national governments are responsible.

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