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Does the World need a space Agency?*

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Carissa Christensen highlights the difficulties faced by regulatory institutions keeping up with private and commercial activities in space (*Nature* 617, 9; 2023). However, her preferred solution -- that every nation should establish its own space agency -- could further complicate matters.

She argues that countries should establish their own space agency to protect their interests. But there would then be almost 200 independent national space agencies, all asserting their perceived national interests in the transnational domain of space. There is a danger that these national interests may conflict.

Ideally, we should be seeking stronger international institutions to regulate space activities, rather than proliferating national ones. One solution might be for the UN to take a much stronger role, as suggested by Clark and Sohn (*World Peace Through World Law*, 2nd ed., Harvard University Press; 1960). They proposed a UN Outer Space Agency that would promote the “exploration and exploitation of outer space for the common benefit of all mankind”.

Perhaps it is time to build on this suggestion and begin laying the foundations for a truly global space agency, able to act on behalf of humanity as a whole?

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