

Marking World Space Week, UN stresses power of space to 'unite the world'

Highlighting the importance of space and its applications for humankind, the United Nations is celebrating World Space Week 2018 with a focus on the role the cosmos plays in bringing people together, back on earth.

"Space Unites the World," the theme for [World Space Week](#) (WSW) 2018 is inspired by UNISPACE+50 – a UN conference in June this year – that brought together leaders in exploration, and experts on space applications from all over the globe.

In addition to promoting cooperation between space-faring and emerging space nations, UNISPACE+50 saw Member States [pledge](#) their collective efforts to enhance the ways space science is used for sustainable development.

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Marked annually from 4-10 October, World Space Week commemorates the launch of Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite to be put into orbit, by the Soviet Union, on 4 October 1957, as well as the entry into force just over a decade later, of what's formally-known as the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Since 2007, over 94 nations have participated in more than 2,250 Space Week events, drawing more than 1.3 million attendees.

Major [events this year](#) include:

- Experience a Transatlantic Space Week at sea, onboard the Queen Mary 2 cruise ship, as it voyages from New York to Southampton.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) hosts an Open Day on 7 October 7 at its technical centre in Noordwijk, Netherlands.
- The Leicester National Space Centre in the UK hosts a Space Week Family Sleepover, giving enthusiasts the chance to snuggle up next to giant rockets – spacesuits are also available.
- In the United States, women in the space industry in various cities, will take part in the 'Ladies Do Launch', event, consisting of a series of live audience interviews.
- In Bangladesh, the non-profit Youthpreneur Network, hosts the Astronomy for Girls event, in the capital Dhaka.

Space boost for women and girls, in STEM fields

The Bangladesh event shows the emphasis being placed during Space Week on encouraging young women and girls to take up space science and the so-called STEM fields overall – science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Speaking at UNISPACE+50, from the International Space Station – at a height of over 400 kilometres in low-Earth orbit – US astronaut Serena Auñón-Chancellor, offered some excellent advice for girls and young women wishing to pursue careers in the STEM fields but feel ambivalent asking questions or learning more people those already established.

“I tell them...bother people” she said. “Bother them if you are interested in their work and research, get them to tell you about it, ask questions ... explore, discover and that is the best way for young girls and women to get interested in STEM fields.”

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Photo Gallery: Space for a better future, the journey of UNISPACE+50

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