

Archaeologists from around the globe were told that UNESCO's World Heritage Convention was under serious threat at the launch of the 7th World Archaeological Congress (WAC-7) at the Dead Sea in Jordan on Sunday night.

In her keynote address Professor Lynn Meskell, Director of the Stanford Archaeology Center, expressed concern that the agendas of individual states is a threat to protecting world heritage.

"This is the only international instrument we have for safeguarding the world's heritage. However, the Convention is currently experiencing a crisis on several fronts - financial, organizational and political - that threaten its mission and its effectiveness to protect and preserve." Professor Meskell told the 500 strong audience.

The UN Convention designates World Heritage Sites, which include Stonehenge, Statue of Liberty, Machu Picchu and the Pyramids.

UNESCO was plunged into crisis in late 2011 following the decision to grant Palestine full membership and the subsequent freezing of US funds, which made up 22% of UNESCO's regular budget. US legislation prohibits funding to any UN agency that grants full membership to any group that does not have "internationally recognized attributes" of statehood.

The World Archaeological Congress is the international conference for archaeologists and is held every four years. WAC-7 has 1,200 participants from 70 countries attending and runs until Saturday, 18 January. The patron for WAC-7 is King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein of Jordan.



## Archaeologists Warned World Heritage Under Threat

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