

Speech of President Sebastian Frankenberger for the Peace Ceremony in Nagasaki

14th February 2026

In the end, it was a human decision.

A decision taken in a time of fear, conflict and war - a decision whose consequences humanity continues to carry to this day.

In a single moment, more than 100,000 lives were lost or irrevocably changed. Countless others endured decades of physical suffering and psychological trauma.

Lives that did not distinguish between soldier and civilian, between adult and child, between those who fought and those who simply lived and those who fought in the resistance.

War is devastating.

And yet, such a moment does not stand alone.

It is shaped by the years that precede it - years in which communication falters, years in which trust erodes, years in which opportunities for dialogue are missed.

If we wish to honour the memory of Nagasaki, we must look not only at that single moment, but at the silence, the mistrust, and the absence of dialogue that allowed it to happen.

And if we wish to build a different future, we must choose differently. There is always an opportunity to make a different choice.

Yesterday, the survivor Mr Seiichiroh Mise shared with us a profound message during his deeply moving testimony:



"Peace is a world heritage to be shared by all humanity."

Peace does not belong to one nation. It is not the property of one generation. It is the shared inheritance of humankind.

And like all heritage, it must be protected, nurtured, and passed on.

When asked what his message to the leaders of the world would be, his answer was simple:

Talk to one another. Communicate.

And that is precisely where our responsibility begins.

As professional tourist guides, we do more than accompany visitors.

- We explain history - including its complexity and its contradictions.
- We provide context - where misunderstanding could easily take root.
- We connect cultures - where distance might otherwise create division.

We explain. We connect. We give context.

And in doing so, we shape perception.

That is influence. And influence is responsibility.

Especially now - as the voices of eyewitnesses grow fewer, as survivors age, as memory becomes the responsibility of those who did not witness, but who must remember.

It will be our responsibility to ensure that remembrance does not fade, that context is not lost, that humanity remains at the centre of the story.

We are currently revising our Code of Guiding Practice to strengthen even further the ethical responsibility of our profession - our commitment to human dignity, to impartiality in our role, to cultural sensitivity, and to truth.

But there is another question we must ask ourselves:

How do we recognise truth?

Where do we look for it? Whom do we listen to? And how do we remain open in times shaped by social media bubbles, by selective narratives, and by deliberate propaganda?





Truth does not shout the loudest. It requires encounter. It requires humility. It requires the willingness to look beyond our own certainty.

As guides, we are trained to look closely — to examine sources, to provide context, to distinguish between perspective and fact. We must encourage critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and the courage to question simplified answers.

In a world of algorithms that divide, we must create spaces that connect.

When people travel, they step outside their familiar surroundings. They step outside their usual perspectives. They are often more open — open to new ideas, new interpretations, new understanding.

In those moments, our words matter.

We must not remain silent.

- Not when history is distorted.
- Not when suffering is minimised.
- Not when human rights are questioned.

We must speak — truthfully, carefully, courageously.

We are often called peace ambassadors.

Our logo shows two hands reaching towards one another — a simple image of encounter and guidance.

But a symbol alone does not create peace.

Peace is responsibility.

- Responsibility for the way we tell history.
- Responsibility for the context we provide.
- Responsibility for the dignity of those whose stories we carry.

From Nagasaki - a place where memory and hope meet - we affirm this responsibility.

We do not leave with emotion alone. We leave with commitment.

Sebastian Frankenberger
President of WFTGA

Peace Declaration

From Nagasaki - where memory and hope meet - the citizens of Nagasaki City and we, as professional tourist guides of WFTGA and ambassadors for peace, affirm our shared commitment.

As interpreters of history and culture, we bear an ethical responsibility towards society and our global community. Universal human rights form the foundation of our coexistence.

This place reminds us to remain impartial in our professional role - but never silent in the face of injustice - and to provide sensitive education, including about the darkest chapters of history, so that they may never be repeated.

The memory of Nagasaki guides our actions.

