



UN SUMMIT FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

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ROUND TABLE 6:

*'ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS
ON THEIR JOURNEYS FROM THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ARRIVAL'*

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Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

- For centuries, the first image people have had of refugees and migrants is the search for food and water, medical attention, and shelter.
- But for today's refugees and migrants, connectivity is almost as important – as we have all seen from media reports and TV news.
- This should come as no surprise. While you clearly cannot 'eat a phone', mobile connectivity is not just a 'nice-to-have' for people on the move – it has become an essential tool for survival.
- Smartphones, WiFi hotspots and other technologies help refugees to communicate, to find information and to stay safe.

- A whole host of free applications available online allow refugees and migrants to let their families know where they are, as well as contacting those who have made the journey ahead of them, so that they can get information on what to expect next.
- Mobile connectivity also delivers the means to navigate, as well as to take photos of important instructions or phone numbers, and to share useful information with others about potential routes across countries and borders.
- Aid agencies and workers who deal with refugees and migrants are now well aware of the need for and the use of technology in delivering assistance, and many now use ICTs to deliver life-saving services to those they are assisting.
- ICTs allow aid workers to increase their immediate impact, broaden their reach, reduce costs and increase speed, responsiveness and accountability, and many aid agencies now set up WiFi networks and distribute SIM cards almost as quickly as they distribute food and water.
- A number of websites now provide information to refugees and migrants, including emergency contacts, asylum processes, and locations where they can seek food, shelter, and medical care. They also deliver real-time information on restrictions at borders, new or closed camps, and changes in local conditions.
- So while it is true that smartphones will never replace food and water as the first priorities for human survival, there is no doubt that ICTs save lives.
- And as we become more connected, ICTs will only become more invaluable.

Thank you very much for your attention.

400 words