



Press Release
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Note to Correspondents

**AUSTRALIAN, UNITED STATES STUDENTS TO QUESTION UN COMMUNICATION CHIEF
ON ROLE OF WORLD BODY, RESPONSE TO MEDIA COVERAGE**

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information Shashi Tharoor will take questions this evening from Australian and American students about the UN role in the world today, during a televised forum between New York and Canberra.

In a live video link between the United Nations and the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, the students will interview Mr. Tharoor on how the United Nations responds to media coverage and public criticism during world crises. Topics will include the oil-for-food controversy, the war in Iraq and the situation in Darfur.

For the forum -- entitled "Talkback Classroom" -- three American high school students will join Mr. Tharoor at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The three Australian students will be at the National Museum's studio in Canberra. The forum takes place from 6:15 to 8 p.m. local (New York) time.

Student audiences in Australia and the United States will also have a Q & A session with a panel of international journalists about how the UN is portrayed in the media. Panellists are Linda Fasulo, the United Nations correspondent for NBC News; Abderrahim Foukara, UN Bureau Chief of Al Jazeera; and Susannah Price, the BBC's correspondent at the UN.

Talkback Classroom is a project of the National Museum of Australia. It links students from across Australia and the world with key politicians and public figures.

The Australian student panel is: Madeleine Tewes, Year 12, Copland College, Canberra; Michael Wright, Year 12, Trinity College, East Perth, and Mitchell Grady, Year 11, St Joseph's College, Brisbane.

Their United States counterparts are: Ethan Waxman, Year 11, Washington, DC; Amy Bisno, Year 12, Larchmount, New York; and Pablo Rojas, Year 12, Bethesda, Maryland.

Talkback Classroom will be webcast live at: www.un.org/works and will be broadcast on Radio National's Life Matters programme. Media contacts: Carmel Mulvany, United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), tel.: 212-963-2300; e-mail: mulvany@un.org; Steven Cutting, e-mail: reproductions@bigpond.com.

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