



# Press Release

Department of Public Information · News Coverage Service · New York

Fifty-eighth General Assembly  
Third Committee  
11th & 12th Meetings (AM & PM)

GA/SHC/3744  
15 October 2003

## **GENDER EQUALITY, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PRESENT CONTINUING CHALLENGES, THIRD COMMITTEE TOLD, AS DEBATE OPENS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES**

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### Background

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met this morning to begin consideration of items related to the status and advancement of women. The Committee has before it reports addressing a number of issues, including discrimination against women, the situation of women in rural areas, the effects of traditional practices on the health of women and girls, violence against women migrant workers, and the status of women in the United Nations system.

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### Interactive Dialogue

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A representative of Syria said she had studied the reports before the Committee. The report on traditional practices with harmful effects on women's health did not reflect the response of the Government of Syria. She therefore rejected the report as incomplete. In another report, there had been a failure to report on assistance to Palestinian women. This gave the impression of bias and disregard for Arab women suffering under occupation.

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The Observer for Palestine said that the report on the follow-up to the Beijing Platform of Action had not mentioned the situation of Palestinian women. She looked forward to the clarification that would be provided on this topic.

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### Statements by Delegations

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MARIAM AL-SHAMISI (United Arab Emirates) ...

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...Women in the United Arab Emirates had been successfully participating in the decision-making process during the last few years. She believed this was an encouraging step towards their participation on a higher level of politics in the near future. In this connection, she urged the Committee not to forget women in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, who suffered the most from violence and humiliation on a daily basis.

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