



ABC News spoke with the former president at the International AIDS Conference, where he was promoting the William J. Clinton Foundation's work on HIV/AIDS.

It is helping provide low-cost medicine to nearly half a million impoverished people with HIV/AIDS around the world.

"It needs doing, and it's both the right thing to do in terms of our national self-interest and on a purely personal moral basis," Clinton said.

"It's imperative and [too many people are dying, not only because there's not enough prevention, but also because we don't get affordable medicine out to them and we don't reach children early enough and we don't build health-care networks in rural areas. All these things require organization](#) and systems that I know how to do."

Clinton, who will turn 60 on Saturday, praised President Bush's program to fight AIDS, though he acknowledged some concerns about the administration's requirements.

Almost a third of the prevention funding goes to abstinence and related programs, which Clinton said were often not effective.

"The fact that they require 30 percent of the money to be spent on abstinence education -- that is a big chunk of money when you consider how expensive the medicine and other things are," Clinton said.

"On the other hand, you have to give them credit. They are getting \$3 billion a year out there that wouldn't have been out there otherwise, and they have saved a lot of lives."

Clinton said that considering all the money the Bush administration was spending on wars while giving tax cuts, "they're still giving quite a bit of money to AIDS. That's good."

On Sunday at the conference, Microsoft founder Bill Gates -- who has pledged almost \$2 billion to combat AIDS -- said that women and girls in developing nations needed to become more empowered in order for the fight against HIV/AIDS to succeed.

Clinton agreed, but said it was difficult to change cultures.

"It's much more likely for HIV to be spread in areas where women's and girls' role in society are weak and where they are not valued and not developed," he said.

"What we try to do is to send in role models that will change that. One of our representatives is a young woman who was infected as a result of a rape. And when people see her, they see she's not ashamed. She doesn't feel stigmatized. "

From <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2314440&page=1&CMP=OTC-RSSFeeds0312>