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AIDS 2014: Bill Clinton urges efficient routes for HIV treatment

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Singapore: Former US President Bill Clinton addressed delegates at AIDS 2014, 20th International AIDS Conference, that finding more economically efficient ways to respond to HIV is vital to saving lives and preventing the spread of the virus.

Mr Clinton, who advocates globally for health security through the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), reflected on the progress made so far in overcoming the HIV epidemic, as well as the challenges that lie ahead.

Mr Clinton said meeting global HIV prevention and support targets is possible within the "existing funding envelope", but only if resources are used more effectively. "The development of super-efficient systems can help us achieve the 90 / 90 / 90 goals," Mr Clinton said, referring to the UNAIDS 2020 targets of 90 percent of people with HIV knowing their status, 90 percent of people with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment and 90 percent of people on treatment having an undetectable viral load.

Mr Clinton said one of the biggest challenges is delivering care to patients in a better way in rural and remote areas.

"How can we reduce the distance they travel to the clinics, the time they wait, the money they spend? How can we launch programs to ensure they feel supported in their communities without the stigma that makes people still, after all these years, drop out of care," Mr Clinton said.

Mr Clinton said ending mother to child transmission of HIV, and supporting children with HIV is another challenge - as well as a tremendous opportunity for sustaining progress in the response to HIV. "Almost 50 percent of all new paediatric infections occur during the breastfeeding period. So keeping these women in care until the end of the breast-feeding period is the single most important thing we can do to achieve an AIDS-free generation."