Your Excellency President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi; Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament; Permanent Secretaries, Chairman and Secretary of the Commission for Higher Education, Government Officials, Vice Chancellors of Universities and Heads of Educational and Training Institutions, Your Excellencies the Ambassadors, Members of the Board of Directors, Members of the University Community, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome each one of you today, as we mark a major milestone in the history of United States International University. I especially want to sincerely thank Your Excellency, for availing yourself to come and personally awarding us the Kenyan Charter. It is a big honor to USIU.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it all began with a dream of encouraging international understanding. As we look back today, what a joy to see it has grown to become one of the largest private universities in East Africa! Our student population currently stands at over 1,900 which is the capacity for this campus. After eight years, these facilities are no longer adequate to increase our student enrollment, expand and diversify the curriculum offerings, meet the increasing demand for quality higher education and sustain the quality of higher education which has become a hallmark of USIU.
Who would have thought that when we moved in 1991, that we would outgrow our campus so soon? I am pleased to note that we have recently purchased an additional 60 acres of land at Garden Estates, which will allow us to expand even further.

Our journey to the present has not been all smooth sailing and we continue to grapple with numerous challenges. One of them remains funding, both for the physical facilities and even for scholarships. For years, our only source of income has remained school fees. If we are to continue striving to keep fees reasonable, then we must raise funds to improve and increase physical facilities. We also want to offer more scholarships so that young people from families that would otherwise not have had a chance to study at USIU are also able to benefit from our quality education.

Currently, the University supports the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Scholarship, the President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi scholarship and merit scholarships. We also have programs for needy students to work and study. In this fund raising venture, I would especially appeal for more partnerships with the private sector and encourage the business community to consider sponsoring needy students as part of their social responsibility. I can assure them that there is no better investment, than in education. I would also encourage the government to grant tax breaks to companies who do contribute to nonprofit educational institutions. This has contributed to corporate support of education. I am especially happy to note that after receiving our charter, our students will be eligible to apply for loans through the Higher Education Loans Board. This new source will undoubtedly increase educational chances of young people from modest income families.
Facility development is also a big challenge. Three structures have been completed this year: an extension on the Library, a Faculty Block and a Student Indoor Recreational Center. While the current campus provides adequate facilities for the 1,900 students studying here, our existing student hostels only house 256 students. This means more than three-quarters of our students are day students and have to commute daily; even some international students have had to find alternative off-campus residence. This is a challenge to us as an institution. As we endeavor to remain international, we must provide enough housing especially for international students and those outside of Nairobi.

Our challenges have not made us shy away from our share of community responsibility. The public road Your Excellency traveled on to our campus is being tarmacked through the courtesy of the University. As you may have noticed, we are now at an advanced stage. The project is set to cost USIU 12 million shillings. We have also run three water lines, a sewer line and installed a transformer -- all out of university funds.

We are proud to see that the education we have provided since USIU’s inception in 1970 has been beneficial, not just for the individual, but has provided a resource for Nation building. Private universities have been able to assist the government in providing educational opportunities to those who can not be accommodated in the public institutions. Your Excellency's award of our charter today is an acknowledgement of our contribution and the quality of the education that we provide.
We therefore welcome you and all those present to celebrate this major milestone with us today.

Thank you.