Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you for the official opening of this magnificent new Library and Information Centre of the United States International University. The facility not only boasts a beautiful architectural design, but also hosts some of the latest technology in information services. I want to take this opportunity to commend the Board of trustees of this university for investing in one of the most modern libraries in our region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The need to expand access to education at all levels continues to be a major challenge to us in Kenya. The government has taken a bold step by providing free primary education, while also ensuring targeted support to vulnerable groups such as learners with special needs and regions that have lagged behind in education. These initiatives have increased primary school enrolment by over 2 million in the last four years.

Similarly, our secondary school sub-sector enrolment has increased from 778,000 to 1,030,000, while enrolment at university level as grown from 80,000 to 112,200 in the same period. In order to address the rapidly growing demand for university education, my Government has upgraded a number of middle level colleges to constituent colleges and campuses of public universities. We are also supporting initiatives by private sector providers of higher education.

Indeed, I am happy to note that U.S.I.U. is one of the fastest growing private universities in Kenya. Its vision to be a premier institution of academic excellence with a global perspective in East Africa, is being spearheaded through the delivery of quality academic programmes. In the pursuit of this goal this new facility will play a critical role.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The access and use of Information and Communications Technology is crucial to the provision of quality university education and training. For students and staff in this region of Africa, this new facility will provide an important window for accessing the world of knowledge and information. It is my hope that the University will allow scholars and researchers in and around the country to access the new facilities. This will enable U.S.I.U. to become an important source of information and reference materials within this region.

I commend this institution’s administration and partners for the wide array of books, course tests and audiovisual materials including CDs and DVDs. I also note that the library subscribes to both print and electronic journals. These sources will be of immense importance to learners and researchers. My challenge to those who will have access to this ultra-modern library is to make full use of the new facilities and to share the knowledge with those who are not able to access the library directly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the modern knowledge society, information and communication are essential to the development of a country. Investments in I.C.T. infrastructure and the development of appropriate human capital are, therefore, critical not only for sustainable development, but also for increased competitiveness in the international arena.

My Government is fully aware of these modern dynamics and recognizes the need for increased investments in I.C.T. infrastructure and human capital. With respect to infrastructure, and as I
pointed out during the launch of VISION TWENTY THIRTY, I.C.T. will play a key and leading role in our national development efforts. I am glad to note that so far, my Government has fully liberalized the telecommunications sector.

Already, the opening up of international gateways has led to lower international telecommunications costs. In addition, my Government has approved major telecommunications projects aimed at bolstering the potential in this sector. These projects include laying of high-speed fiber-optic networks throughout the country to improve connectivity. We are also implementing the Rural Access Project to extend connectivity to the rural areas.

Moreover, we are investing heavily in computers both in the public sector. So far, my Government has embraced e-government across the public service and has mounted a programme to supply computers to schools. Already, 213 public secondary schools have received grants of 1.5 million shillings per school. These developments in the telecommunications sector will no doubt improve the way we do business locally and with the rest of the world.

I urge Kenyans to fully embrace the use of I.C.T. in order to tap its vast potential for wealth and employment creation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we seek to enhance our human capital capacity, we shall continue to support those who wish to invest in higher education in order to meet the growing demand. I take this opportunity to encourage our universities, both private and public, to explore ways and means of increasing enrolment. I also urge universities to aggressively foster creativity so that they can become centres of discovery and innovation.

Let us all appreciate that all famous universities of the world boast of numerous patents that are turned into products and services that generate income for them and their host countries. In this regard, I am happy that my government has currently provided 200 million shillings towards a research fund that can be assessed by both private and public universities. My Government will continue to mobilize resources for research work and to foster closer ties between universities and other stakeholders, particularly industry.

In addition, I urge our universities to give their curricula an international flavour and strengthen exchange programmes. This will help in ensuring that our graduates will be internationally competitive. It will also help to bring together people of many nationalities, thus building greater international understanding. In this regard, I am glad to note that this university has students from forty different nations across the world and that foreign students constitute nearly fifteen percent of the student population.

I commend this effort and urge the management to continue playing the important role of creating linkages between our people and other nations. This exposure is a sure ingredient to creating global citizens who can fit in well with the best talent from other parts of the world. In this regard I commend the university for being a true player in our global village.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all those who have made contributions towards this project. I also thank the university management for the immense contribution this university continues to make in our country and other countries who have students here.

With these remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare this Library and Information Centre officially open.

Thank you and God bless you.