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.

I would like to take this opportunity to also welcome all of our guests for the
awarding of the Charter to United States International University by His
Excellency, President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi. Your Excellency, we have been
working toward being here with you today for the award of this Charter since we
registered with the Commission for Higher Education in 1989. This represents
ten years of protracted effort to reach this point where we are recognized as an
institution of quality by the government of Kenya. But we can not bask in the
glory of this day alone since there were many who came before us that made this
day possible.

I would like to acknowledge our late founder, Dr. William Rust whose vision of
global understanding and cooperation through education set the stage for the
creation of USIU. Dr. Rust sent an envoy to East Africa with the aim of
establishing an associated campus of United States International University to
serve the people of Africa. Although other countries were visited as potential
sites for the university, Kenya was selected because of its political stability. His
meeting with the founding father of the nation, the late President Mzee Jomo
Kenyatta, was a great success because President Kenyatta welcomed the idea
of establishing an American based university in Kenya. As a result, an
agreement was signed in 1969 by the Kenyan government and President Rust to
begin the first private university in Kenya.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Lillian Beam who was the Director of USIU-
Africa for 10 years. She was committed to developing USIU-Africa into an
institution of excellence. Under her leadership the campus grew from 200
students to 1200 students in 1994. The University went from being referred to as
"isn't that that university in the hotel" to the respectable institution of higher
learning that it is today.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of my
Management Council and Academic Management Team. They have put in long
hours, hard work, creative problem solving and sometimes we have fought, disagreed and challenged each other to make this institution grow and flourish.

A special thanks goes to our board members, especially our local board members, Mr. Nathaniel Tum and Dr. Eddah Gachukia who would listen to me lament over how to get this charter and always offer a remedy. Thanks for your incredible support.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the support we have received from Dr. Garry Hays and the administration, faculty and students of the San Diego campus. We have worked together on curriculum development, examining library resources, revising our financial aid program, admissions and registration procedures, faculty handbooks, employee handbooks, student handbooks, budgets and numerous other projects. There have been long trips and late night phone calls all in an effort to facilitate the growth of this institution.

The road to this point has been as rocky as the one outside these gates. With the signing of the agreement between the Kenyan government and Dr. Rust the university was established but did not open its doors until the following year. In 1970, USIU-Africa, the first private, secular, independent university in East Africa, began with five American students in a small house in Parklands. Later USIU purchased land and acquired an American high school known as Nairobi International School (NIS). The high school was to serve as a feeder to the new university because American education was perceived as inferior to the British educational system that predominated in the country at that time.

In 1972 USIU-Africa opened as a comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade with the first year of a baccalaureate program. Its enrollment of 25 university students continued to be American. The following year the second year of courses were added, students then transferred to USIU San Diego to complete their programs.

In 1976 the Nairobi International School (NIS) and the land, which is today International School of Kenya (ISK), was sold to the American and Canadian Embassies. The university component relocated to rented premises on Ralph Bunch Road in 1977, to a house in Parklands in 1980, and then to the New Mayfair Hotel in 1983. USIU-Africa moved to its present 20-acre campus in Kasarani in September 1991.

In 1977 USIU-Africa introduced the last two years of the baccalaureate program and a master of science in management and organizational development (MOD). Nine students were admitted to the graduate program. USIU-Africa held its first commencement exercise in 1979 and graduated 23 students, nine masters and 14 undergraduates. Today, USIU offers baccalaureate programs in business administration, international business administration, hotel and restaurant management, journalism, international relations, tourism management and master's programs in business administration, international business administration, organizational development...
and counseling psychology. A bachelor's program in information systems and technology and a master's in international relations will begin in January, 2000.

Student enrollment also increased significantly with the move to the new campus. Fall Quarter 1991, the numbers increased from the consistent 200 students at the Mayfair Hotel to 400 students at Kasarani. By fall 1992 there were approximately 700 degree seeking students, three years later there were 1172 students and today we are at 1950. The ethnic composition of the student body also changed over its 26 year history from being all American to now being predominantly Kenyan. The faculty has also changed from being predominantly American to now being predominantly Kenyan. Administrative and support staff has grown from approximately five employees in the early years to currently over 200.

The vision for USIU-Africa has remained constant over the last thirty years. The vision is to provide multicultural understanding and cooperation through quality education. In order to do this we have concentrated on five areas to improve the quality of education at USIU:

No institution can facilitate learning without its most essential component -- quality faculty. Over the last five years the number of full time faculty at USIU has increased fourfold. They are committed to teaching, scholarly work and student development. However, as we expand our programs and student numbers the pool of qualified candidates for faculty positions is dwindling. Both public and private universities are competing for the same faculty. Your Excellency, we need to find a way to bring our scholars home and train faculty in areas where the expertise is needed.

The key source of knowledge at any institution is its library and over the years the university has expanded its resources so that our students have the latest in library books, text books and periodicals. Fully automated, students can retrieve information readily. We are also working closely with the African Virtual Library so that we can share resources among the public and private universities in the East African region.

In today's world if a student is not technologically competent they will not be prepared for the workplace. All of our students are required to be computer literate before they can graduate. Moreover, our entire campus is networked with full Internet access, and all of our administrative services are automated to assure ease of retrieval of student information and administrative data. This quarter students can register for classes from home or work through our online registration process. We are also collaborating with the Kenya Educational Network (KENET) to improve access to the information highway for all educational institutions in Kenya. We all appreciate Your Excellencies foresight in agreeing to support this project through the USAID Leland Initiative. We will now be able to optimize our use of this miraculous technology. We need no
longer lag behind the rest of the world. The challenge now is to bring this technology into the classroom through course content. We will become the developers of content that is relevant to the students we serve.

Students need an environment that is conducive to learning and faculty and staff need a good working environment. Over the last eight years we have built this current campus and have purchased an additional 60 acres in order to accomplish this end. We will begin working on a new master plan to incorporate this new acquisition beginning in January. We would hope that the government would support private universities by providing the infrastructure needed to permit expansion. This way our limited funds can be directed toward educational activities rather than building public roads and sewers.

Academic programming remains the biggest challenge for institutions in Kenya. More Kenyans go to the United States to school than any other African nation. Last year (1997/98) saw 4,346 Kenyan students go to the United States, the next leading nation was Nigeria with 2,436 students. 72% of those students were undergraduates. The majority of foreign students are seeking degrees in business administration followed by general engineering, and computer and information sciences. This would suggest that students are going outside of the country to get degrees that are offered locally. Is it the perception of the quality of the degree or the employment opportunities that may be available to them upon completion of the degree? What ever the reason, the educational, government and business sectors must work together to retain the best human resources to help build our nations.

Finally, I would like to commend Your Excellency on the establishment of a commission to oversee the quality of education offered to the citizens of Kenya. The Commission for Higher Education is one of the few agencies of its type on the continent of Africa. We have cooperatively with the Commission for Higher Education to assure that the students that we are producing at USIU can compete in the workplace and be contributing members of this or any nation.

So here we are 30 years later. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta had a vision for this newly independent nation of Kenya and Dr. William Rust had a vision of international education. Long before other nations on the continent saw the advantage of private tertiary education, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta was planning for it in the development of this nation. In 1969, there was one private university, USIU and one public university, University of Nairobi. Today, Your Excellency, you can be proud to leave a legacy of 5 public universities and 5 chartered private institutions to provide for the educational needs of the wananche. Mzee Kenyatta knew then as your excellency has demonstrated now through your policies on education, that education is essential for the development of the nation.
For those who have come before us, we would like to express our gratitude for building the foundation on which we have grown. For those who will come after us, you will have the responsibility of continuing to improve the quality of education offered at USIU and in this nation.

Asante sana to Your Excellency, the Commission for Higher Education and the people of Kenya for supporting this institution over the last thirty years and helping us to achieve this recognition of excellence.