Mr Speaker, I also rise to comment on the Statement ably presented by my good Friend, the Hon Member of Parliament for Nsawam Adoagyiri.

Mr Speaker, the issue about scholarship is very important and critical to the heart of education in this country. Most of the time, the impression is that those who are brilliant are the ones who win scholarships. But from the Statement the Hon Member made, we have come to agree that several other people, including disabled people and those who suffer hardships are also included in those who are open to get scholarships in this country.

Mr Speaker, the challenge, however, is the closeness of this facility to the many people who are qualified to get it, and that is the concern expressed by the Hon Member of Parliament, and I do support that.

Mr Speaker, I recall that several years ago, in 1985, as a young person, I travelled to Accra here for a scholarship grant. I had passed the interview and even though it was clear for me to have made the trip out of the country to benefit from the scholarship, I failed to get it because I was to wait in this country; I waited for up to three weeks, I could not continue to sustain it and I had to leave.

Mr Speaker, this is just a clear example of the challenge we have when we have to centralise everything in Accra. The Scholarships Secretariat is still one of the organisations directly under the Presidency and controlled by a Minister of State at the Presidency, who has no offices outside the Presidency.

So, even if there is a challenge and one has to address the challenge with the Hon Minister, one would have to make the uneasy trip to the Presidency and go through all the checkpoints in order to meet the Hon Minister, who is in charge of this very important —[Interruption.]

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

So, it is really cumbersome to have a Minister of State at the Presidency in charge of this important facility, to have a secretariat which is only in Accra, to have people wanting to clear issues with the Scholarships Secretariat beyond the national coordinator, having to go to the Presidency.

Imagine a poor boy coming all the way from any place in the North to Accra. In the first place, it is a strange place to him, and secondly, he must now go to an Hon Minister at the Presidency where there are military and policemen guarding the place.

Mr Speaker, it is important that we take this Statement serious and find out how we could help the Scholarships Secretariat to decentralise, so that people could, at least, go to their regions to
have interviews done and to have their fate determined; whether they could gain scholarships or not.

Mr Speaker, I believe very strongly that if this matter is taken seriously, we could have Regional Coordinating Councils supporting the Scholarships Secretariat, to do some of the things that they are supposed to do here.

If they do not have enough resources to set up offices there, we could have the Coordinating Councils to set up offices and conduct interviews on behalf of the Scholarships Secretariat, with just a member travelling from Accra to these places to help select qualified candidates.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I would want to support the Statement and agree with the Hon Member who made the Statement that it is important we review the establishment of the Scholarships Secretariat, and see how we could ensure a decentralised system of awarding scholarships.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.