Mr Speaker, I am exceedingly humbled and extremely grateful for the opportunity given me to make a Statement on the entry of Ghana’s first space satellite into orbit; the significance and future prospects. Mr Speaker, I take the floor on a matter of personal and collective honour and on a particular delight concerning not only this august House, but the entire nation as well. This is no ordinary invention or breakthrough of regular unearthing by a group of individuals or an institution. Mr Speaker, the first space satellite was released and deployed into orbit at an altitude of 420 on Friday, July 7, 2017, at noon.

Secondly, the space satellite has low- and high-resolution cameras on board capable of taking pictures of Ghana and providing data on happenings on Ghana’s coastal areas and the environments to the outside world. I congratulate the All Nations University College in Koforidua on reaching an unprecedented goal in Ghana, a goal that was achieved on the heels of global recess and demotivation. A goal that was accomplished and has surpassed in record breaking time at a stretch, when Africans in general are often ridiculed and our tertiary institutions are criticised within an ears reach.

I am so proud of the All Nations University for setting their sights high and making every effort to prove to the world what Ghana is capable of. Mr Speaker, space satellites automatically have emotional impact on our day-to-day activities. They make life better by offering contemporary conveniences through broadcast education. Space satellites are simply artificial objects put into orbit. As man-made objects put into the orbit, space satellites inform, educate and entertain the human race through television, in-flight phone communication on airplanes, navigations, instant credit card authorisation, weather forecast on a global scale and land monitoring, among others.

Mr Speaker, we are able to watch television in the comfort of our homes and offices as a result of space satellites. Space satellites are the pillars of network and cable television. These space satellites transmit signals from a principal location which produce programming to smaller locations. The smaller locations then spread the signals locally via cables or the airwaves. As I am speaking, the whole world is watching parliamentary proceedings live because newsfeeds are sent from the floor of Parliament to the GBC studio via satellite. Mr Speaker, again, our law enforcement agencies, pilots, captains of ships, et cetera. are able to communicate among themselves at rates that rival the highest end cell phone and smartphone models through space satellites.

This is because space satellites are often the main conduit of voice communication. They provide in-flight phone communications on airplanes and determine exact locations at areas where phone lines are impaired. The satellite-based navigation systems like the Navstar Global Positioning Systems (GPS) enable anyone with a handheld receiver to determine his or her location within a few meters. Where other navigation tools may not exist and soldiers are trapped in unfamiliar territories, GPS is usually used to determine distance and locations. Mr Speaker, on
banking and finance, space satellite is used in the performance of inventory management and automated teller banking services from big cities to even small towns. Corporate bodies are able to communicate with their foreign partners via video conferencing without necessarily travelling as a result of space satellites.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of weather projection and environmental monitoring, space satellites monitor ocean temperatures, prevailing currents and provide meteorologists with the ability to see climatic conditions on a global scale, allowing them to follow the effects of phenomena like volcanic eruptions, burning gas and oil fields, to the development of large systems like hurricanes. Imaging satellites can measure the changing sizes of glaciers, which is difficult to do from the ground due to the remoteness and darkness of the polar regions. Satellites are some of the best sources of data for climate change because satellites are used to determine long-term patterns of rainfall, vegetation cover and emissions of greenhouse gases.

Mr Speaker, we can utilise space satellites in so many ways from crime solving to rescuing of accident victims. Mr Speaker, on safety and precautions, we can always count on the efficiency of space satellites. Ghana can use earth observation satellites to monitor the ocean and wind currents as well as oil spills and water pollution on the Jubilee offshore oilfield. This will go a long way to organise emergency responders and environmental clean-up for our prestigious offshore oil field. They can efficiently monitor largescale infrastructure which would require enormous hours of land or air-based inspection. For example, fuel pipelines that need to be checked for leaks.

Mr Speaker, we can also use space satellites to inspect the amount of damage caused by erosion, sand winning, illegal mining activities (Galamsey) et cetera. This is because space satellites have the potency to detect underground water and mineral sources by monitoring the transfer of nutrients and contaminants from land into waterways. They measure land and water temperatures, the growth of algae in seas and the erosion of topsoil from land. Now, nearly anyone with an internet connection can find his house using Google Earth. Mr Speaker, whenever there is a disaster or an epidemic, we can also count on space satellites to take the exploration out of “search and rescue” for people in distress in marginalised regions. This is because imaging satellites produce high-resolution data of almost the entire landmass on earth. Mr Speaker, last but not the least, if we want to develop our country, we can never do without space satellite. Satellites are increasingly important to the developing world.

For a country like Ghana, with populations separated by uneven landscape and different languages, we can use communication satellites to provide remote populations access to education and to medical expertise that would otherwise not reach those in marginalised areas. We can also use earth observation satellites to practice informed resource management and support relief agencies to follow refugee population migration. Satellites help to rapidly communicate between a number of widely dispersed locations. To sum it all, we might ask ourselves a question which will endure beyond our time here. What can we do to support the
satellite evolution? In fact, we are too blessed a people and too great a nation, with so many amazing potentials to adjust and to progress our development process forward.

We are simply too great a nation to not learn once more the awesome power of space satellites. Today, as tomorrow, this will require real change. This will require real courage. And, again and again, this will demand genuine change of mindsets. Fellow Members of Parliament, join me in calling for more national involvement in this global revolution. At stake is our country’s future. Mr Speaker, I know this Government is more than willing to support this noble cause.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I say a big thank you for this opportunity.