Honourable Chairperson,

While 89% of respondents in a survey done by StatsSA indicated that they have faith in Statistics South Africa as an entity and views it as a credible and professional institution for now, which is commendable, the opposite is probably true for other state departments, their entities, and the public service at large.

The public service should be efficient, effective and development orientated and most importantly it should be professional and accountable. Furthermore, constitutional values and principles on all levels of public administration are not negotiable they should be present, promoted and maintained and the core mandate of the Department of Public Service and Administration should be to ensure exactly that.

Why then does the South African public not have faith in our public service? Has the department in conjunction with every other government department failed to ensure professional and accountable public service to our citizens? Yes, honourable house chair, they have.

The service delivery rendered to us as South African citizens is shockingly poor to say the least. But let me not generalise, there are public servants who work days and nights to delivery efficient, effective and professional service and they must be commended – we thank them for that, but sadly they are few and far between.

Die waarheid is, agbare voorsitter, dat hierdie departement die mooiste planne met die mooiste woorde op papier kan saamstel, maar as die eindgebruiker van die staatsdiens nie effektiewe en behoorlike diens ontvang nie help al hierdie woorde en al hierdie planne net mooi niks. As ‘n nuwe ma twee jaar moet wag vir haar kraamverlofeis om deur die werkloosheidsversekeringsfonds se personeel verwerk te word nadat sy 6 keer dieselfde dokumente moes indien omdat personeel die dokumente misplaas en verloor sal sy nie vertroue in die staatsdiens hê nie.

As ‘n bejaarde dame deur ‘n verpleegster in ‘n staatshospitaal kaal uitgetrek word en weerloos op haar bed gelos word vir die ganse saal en hul besoekers om te sien, sal sy en haar familie nie vertroue in die staatsdiens hê nie.

As ‘n leerlingbestuurder nie ‘n afspraak kan kry om sy bestuurslisensieaansoek te voltooi, sodat hy vir ‘n werk kan aansoek doen, omdat die lisensiekantoor een personeellid en geen administratiewe toerusting het nie, sal hy nie vertroue in die staatsdiens hê nie.

Dit is tog die einddoel waarna hierdie departement moet streef, dit is tog waarom programme wat deur die NSG aangebied word wentel, maar dit word nie op grondvlak deur die kliënte van die staat, ons die belastingbetalers, die inwoners ervaar nie.

Yet chair, Public-service compensation has grown by about 40% in real terms over the past 14 years, and the wage bill remains the largest component of public spending. This means that government has to increase its borrowing to sustain its salary bill, a salary bill spent on a great number of public servants who do not have the will, skill or desire to delivery professional, efficient and friendly service to the very people who pay and suffer to keep them in their jobs in the first place.

We note that there are plans to stabilise the public service by restoring stability and credibility in state institutions, these plans contain words such as programmatic interventions, which will include productivity measurement, these words have been used for years, yet the standard of public service has never been this low!

The same goes for the National School of Government, which has a constitutional mandate to ensure that all of the basic values and principles are instilled into the value system and performance of all public servants and representatives. This is not the case, the end-users of the public service very rarely see these wonderful values and principles that the NSG is supposed to instil in public servants, is the NSG failing? It would seem so.

And the same goes for the Public Service Commission who is vested with custodial oversight responsibilities for the Public Service and who is supposed to monitor, evaluate, and investigate public administration practices.

Honourable chair, I ask this question: if the department and its entities such as the National School of Government and the Public Service Commission fully delivered on their mandate and plans as set out in the budget and beyond, if they effectively and efficiently implemented all of these beautifully set out goals, why is the public service underperforming? Who is not doing their job and who’s responsibility is it ultimately?

I thank you.