

# Role model Climbing to the top

## Sibusiso rises above those who only dream dreams

**A**t the age of 33, Sibusiso Vilane has done what many people thought was impossible - climbing the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. Importantly he did it twice in three years.

### ■ First African

Vilane was the first African to brave the freezing weather conditions of minus 30 degrees and strong winds before topping Everest. He spent 24 hours in the icy temperatures in the area regarded as the "death zone". Vilane first climbed Everest in 2003.

In an interview with *Vuk'uzenzele*, Vilane, now a motivational speaker, says his trip was aimed at showing people, especially Africans, that everything is possible.

### ■ Achieve goals

"Everybody can achieve their goals if they show determination," he said.

Vilane said everybody has their own Everest to climb in life.

Vilane, who has been a game ranger for 12 years, said people must be patient in life because improving one's quality of life was always "slow and frustrating".

"I believe that in the end hardship will make a person

grow stronger and enjoy the fruits," he added.

In June 2005, Vilane - successfully climbed Everest a second time.

On his way to the top of Everest Vilane was "shocked" to walk pass bodies of people who died attempting to climb it.

"I felt the fear when seeing motionless bodies lying and covered on ice. But I managed to hold myself and continue with the journey." The first trip took Vilane two months, whereas the second one took him two-and-half months.

### ■ Giving back

His second successful trip to Everest, he said, was driven by his willingness to give back to the community.

"Planting South Africa's flag for the second time on top made me feel so happy because I knew I was raising money for charity organisations," Vilane said.

The organisations were Swaziland-based SOS Children's Village, a Chris Hani-Baragwanath-based body doing research on children and Africa Foundation, an organisation that helps pre-schools have proper facilities.

-Justice Mohale



### Did you know?

- Mount Everest in Nepal is the tallest mountain in the world.
- The mountain was first climbed by Sir Edmund Hilary in 1953.
- The first woman to climb Mt Everest was Junko Tabei on May 16 1975
- Tom Whittaker became the first disabled climber to reach the summit on 27 May 1998.
- Sibusiso Vilane was the first African to climb the mountain in 2005.

### Who is Sibusiso Vilane?

Sibusiso Vilane was born in Schoemansdal in Mpumalanga. Apartheid laws forced his parents to flee to Swaziland, where he grew up. He began mountain climbing a few years ago. Vilane is married to Nomsa and has 3 children Setsabile, 11, Bhekiwe, 8, and Bavukile, 2 and lives in Nelspruit.