

Dr Tichaona Mangwende

Dr. Tichaona Mangwende was born on October 4, 1966 and grew up in Zimbabwe. He obtained bachelors (Applied Biology and Biochemistry) and Masters (Biotechnology; sandwich program with the Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) degrees from the University of Zimbabwe. His PhD (June, 2001) was from the University of Cape Town, Department Molecular and Cell Biology in plant molecular virology under the supervision of Professors Jennifer A Thomson and Ed Rybicki-working on development of transgenic maize resistant to *Maize Streak Virus*.



Tich joined SIRDC-Zimbabwe as a Research Scientist and Principal Investigator (1999-2002) of the DGIS-Netherlands funded Maize Project. The project was on QTL discovery in maize for drought tolerance and insect resistance using marker-assisted selection.

A parallel project funded by the DGIS-Netherlands was also underway at KARI-Kenya. CIMMYT-Mexico provided technical backstopping to both projects and Tich had the opportunity to get trained in Mexico (2000).

The major outcome for both projects was production of in-bred lines with drought tolerance and insect resistance.

Tich went to USA (August 2002-2005) as a postdoctoral fellow working on a USDA-ARS funded project focusing on suppressors of gene silencing (and interacting partners). His first port of call was AgriLife Center, University of Texas A & M, in Weslaco-Texas. He worked for a year (2002-2003) in Professor Erik Mirkov's laboratory before proceeding to Hawaii Agriculture Research Center. He continued working on the project started in Texas with Dr Henrik Albert and left HARC after two years.

Tich found himself back at UCT (2005) to collect a Patent Award from the Innovation Fund, Department of Science & Technology, South Africa for work done on *Maize Streak Virus* resistance (together with fellow inventors Dr Dionne Shepard, Professors Jennifer A Thomson and Ed Rybicki). He decided to apply his knowledge of gene silencing to research on RNA processing in *P. falciparum*, the causative agent of malaria, as a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral fellow (2006-2007) with Dr Heinrich Hoppe at the Division of Pharmacology-UCT. This work was further funded for an additional year (2008) as a University of Pretoria-South African Malaria Initiative postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Biochemistry, University of Pretoria.

Tich then moved back to UCT as a senior researcher (2009)-Division of Medical Virology-Professor Carolyn Williamson's HIV Diversity and Pathogenesis Research Group before joining NEPAD/SANBio as Programme Manager.

Tich is married to Dr Alice T Maredza and they have a daughter (Lizzie) and son (Anesu)-and are expecting a new addition to the family.