



## **CDCS AAR Meta Themes**

### **Overall Messages:**

- CDCS process is reinvigorating the strategic process, promoting the use of rigorous analysis in decision making and implementation, and encouraging missions to create innovative approaches in development.
- Strategic thinking and planning also is being integrated into behaviors in a number of missions.
- Missions are doing their best to both develop their CDCS and continue with existing programs. Realigning portfolios and rethinking roles and responsibilities, while at the same time being more strategic, are common themes.

### **Cross-Cutting Key Takeaways:**

- Important to have senior leadership and buy-in that encourages and supports the process
- Key to have strong leadership in Regional Bureaus and Program Offices
- Importance of internal engagement within mission
- Stakeholder/partner engagement began early and continues into implementation
- Missions cannot stop implementation – the CDCS process take time so Missions in most cases continue activity implementation based on previous guidance while also launching project design based on Program Cycle guidance. Result is messy but realistic.
- CDCS process was used to rethink and reorient long-term planning
- Evidence based analysis guided strategies
- Strong Results Framework are seen to be living tools that support the vision of the CDCS during implementation
- Critical that CDCS is viewed as a strategy document and not an implementing document, Mission must take a strategic mindset
- The institutional knowledge of FSNs was vital to a successful process
- Cross-Cutting Development Objectives and program integration; all four had to deal with spatial/focusing issues, but each dealt with them differently. Earmarks and budget were major issues.