

power. And, if it does, who will hold the power - the state, banks, criminal organizations? The participants offered no firm conclusions to this question except to say that it would have to be decided on what government should control and what it should be getting out of.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND GOVERNANCE**

### ***Governing in an Information Society***

The final presentation was from Steven A. Rosell, president of The Meridian International Institute, who reported on the work of a Roundtable of senior Canadian government officials and private sector executives who over the last four years have been examining the fundamental changes in the information society, and their implications for the process of governance.

Mr. Rosell began by defining what is the information society and noted that it was not just the product of, or equivalent to, information technology, but rather generated by an interplay of social and technological changes including: developments in information processing; emergence of a more educated and informed population; increasing role and reach of the mass media; higher degrees of specialization in a more knowledge-based economy and consequent change in the structure of work; and a much stronger interaction among private and public organizations. The information society that results, according to Rosell, is characterized by greater interconnectivity; a vast degree of information availability (along with greater overload, filtering, and denial); compression of time and space; and greater unpredictability.

Rosell stated that the emergence of an information society has had five major effects: (1) globalization; (2) fragmentation, decentralization, and democratization (*e.g.*, proliferation, knowledge-based companies, the increased role of sub-national governments, and the multiplication of players involved in the process of governance); (3) breakdown of the bureaucratic/industrial way of organizing characterized by downsizing, privatization, contracting out, delayering, and the reorganization of organizations to create less hierarchical, more flexible "client driven" organizations; (4) decreasing the possibility of secrecy; and (5) the blurring of boundaries between industries, between public and private sectors, between goods and services, between states, which have all led to the need for new alliances and relationships and the need to rethink conceptual categories.

Rosell then reported on the initial findings of the Roundtable. He said that in the more richly interconnected and rapidly changing environment of the information society, older ways of organizing and governing, which are premised on a slower, and more restricted flow of information and more limited interconnections seem to be overwhelmed. To deal effectively with the more rapidly changing environment we need to develop more learning-based approaches to how we organize and govern ourselves. Leadership in this context, according to Rosell, means taking the lead in establishing an overall framework of goals, interpretations and values - a shared mental map - and then encouraging a wide range of