Bosai reconstruction—will be held in March in Sendai, one of the cities struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake. We against natural disasters at all stages, from prevention and mitigation to post-disaster management and solutions, the forum differs from typical academic conferences. The reason for such a focus lies in the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck many parts of the Tohoku region, including Sendai City, in 2011. "Japan has been collecting disaster data and developing countermeasures since the early days, including publishing an annual White Paper on Disaster Management since 1963. Its countermeasures and level of knowledge are considered among the best in the world. However, despite all those efforts, the extensive damage caused by the giant earthquake and tsunami of 2011 came as an enormous shock to those of us working in the field. It was a turning point for Japan, making us concentrate more on actual practice," says Ono, the founder of the forum.

Since the earthquake, efforts have accelerated in the Tohoku region that are leading international movements toward bolstering disaster risk reduction. In 2012, Tohoku University in Sendai established IRIDeS with the aim of creating an academic framework for studying practical disaster management utilizing bosai. Sendai was chosen to host the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, which adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 as the first such agreement to set specific global targets. To achieve those targets, IRIDeS established the Global Centre for Disaster Statistics. Along with monitoring the disaster damage statistics of countries around the world, the center attempts to propose investments needed in risk reduction tailored to each country. The World BOSAI Forum evaluates the progress of the Sendai Framework and makes concrete proposals. Another distinguishing feature of the forum is its openness to citizen participation. Anyone who registers can join the forum, which is designed to be friendly and, in the past, has included presentations on stockpiling food and related activities by students, as well as a walking tour of disaster-affected areas. The lessons of the 2011 disaster are very much alive within such offerings as well. Ono, who volunteered his time and efforts after the disaster in order to interview affected residents, found that while many of those on the coast had evacuated to safety thanks to their heightened awareness, quite a few living more inland had hesitated to evacuate and thus failed to escape in time. To prevent such a tragedy from ever occurring again, continuous efforts must be made to raise public awareness—that is the strong belief incorporated within the forum.

Ono believes that the fact of having organized the forum cooperatively with local citizens helps deliver a more powerful message on the necessity of bosai, from the perspective of those directly involved, to countries that need to prepare countermeasures themselves. "Nobody else in the world should have to go through the same horrible experiences that we did—such strong thoughts will be conveyed via the words of those who personally bore the effects of the disaster. We hope to continue sending out such a message, grounded in the perspective of individual citizens, and realize a disaster-resilient world."