

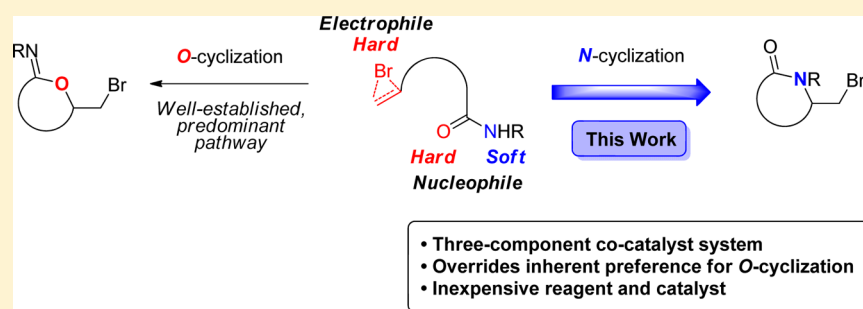
An unexpected Bromolactamization of Olefinic Amides Using a Three-Component Co-catalyst System

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S Supporting Information



ABSTRACT: Reaction between (*N,N*-dimethylamino)pyridine and isocyanate unexpectedly produced a three-component mixture. By using this mixture as an unprecedented three-component catalyst system, a facile and selective bromolactamization of olefinic amides has been developed. The protocol confers enhanced selectivity of *N*- over *O*-cyclization, leading to the formation of a structurally diverse range of lactams including both small and medium ring sizes.

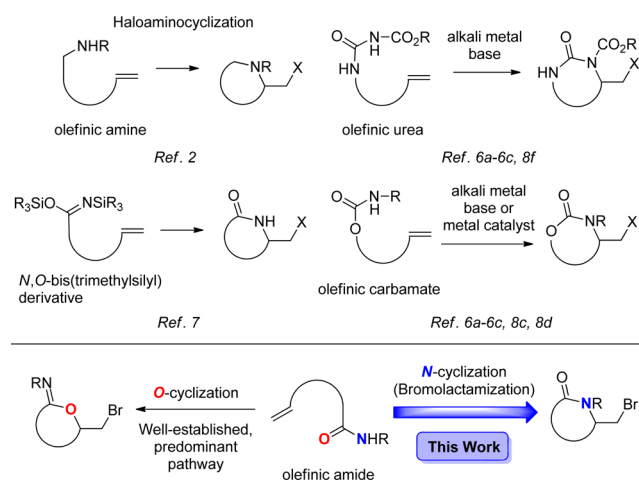
INTRODUCTION

Electrophilic reactions, such as halolactonization, have been the subject of intensive research interest.¹ In recent years, elegant reports on haloaminocyclization reactions have been documented.² In haloaminocyclization, olefinic amines, which contain a single nitrogen nucleophile, could undergo ring-closing in the presence of an electrophilic halogen source to afford *N*-heterocyclic products, i.e., pyrrolidines and piperidines. The cyclization of an unactivated olefinic amide, on the other hand, presents formidable challenges. As an olefinic amide contains both oxygen (hard) and nitrogen (soft) nucleophiles in the same system, a key issue is the difficulty to induce *N*-cyclization to give the desired lactam based on the hard/soft acid–base theory (HSAB).³ Due to the higher electronegativity of oxygen compared to nitrogen in an amide system, *O*-cyclization commonly occurs as the predominant pathway in the halocyclization of olefinic amide substrates, and consequently, there is very little or no *N*-cyclization. In many cases, hydrolysis of the *O*-cyclized products could furnish the corresponding lactones, and this has commonly been employed as a strategy for preparing lactones in various multistep syntheses.⁴

As lactams are prevalent in a variety of natural products and pharmaceuticals,⁵ concise and efficient methods to construct lactams will thus be highly valuable from a synthetic viewpoint. Sporadic reports of protocols for electrophilic halocyclization that gave small-ring (e.g., 5- and 6-membered) *N*-cyclized products have been documented (Scheme 1). For example, some cyclizations can be promoted by stoichiometric amounts

Scheme 1. Various Strategies To Achieve *N*-Cyclization

Existing methods of *N*-cyclization in the literature:



of alkali metal base.⁶ In a report of iodocyclization of *N,O*-bis(trimethylsilyl) derivatives, five-membered ring iodolactams can be obtained in good yields, but 2 equiv of moisture-sensitive TMSOTf are required.⁷ In many cases, highly specific substrates such as olefinic carbamates or ureas were used to achieve the desired *N*-cyclization.⁸ Conversely, a general

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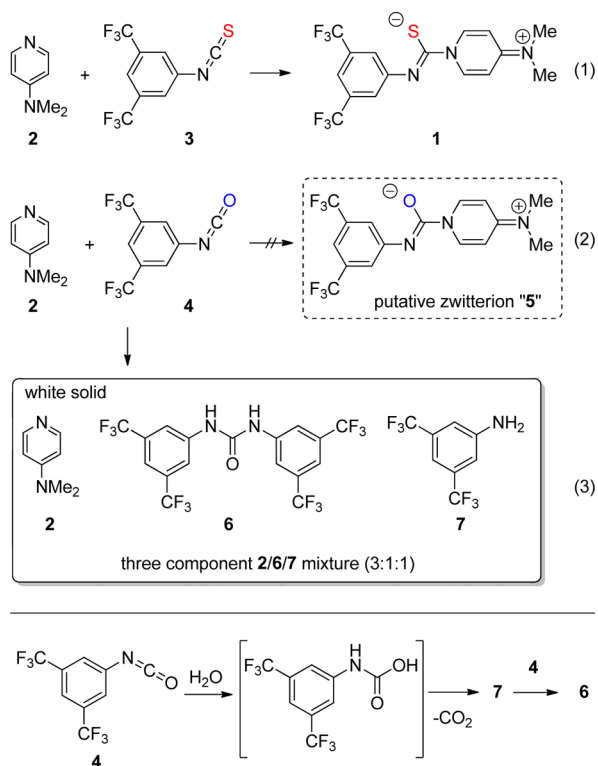
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protocol that can effect the direct cyclization of an olefinic amide to give the lactam remains largely elusive. Recently, we reported a carbamate-catalyzed enantioselective bromolactamization process.⁹ Building on our recent research effort, we envisage that the development of a more general halolactamization reaction that (1) uses readily available catalysts and reagents and (2) encompasses a broader and more structurally diverse range of substrates would greatly enhance its utility in synthetic chemistry. In addition, there is no reported case on the synthesis of medium-ring size lactams through a catalytic halolactamization process.¹⁰ Herein, we disclose an unexpected result of the use of a three-component catalyst system in the lactamization (*N*-cyclization) of olefinic amides that addresses these gaps in the current literature. While most cocatalyst systems involving two catalytic species have been studied,¹¹ this report will demonstrate a highly uncommon cooperative organocatalytic protocol using three catalytic species.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previously, we described the use of the sulfur-based zwitterionic catalyst **1** in the medium-ring lactonization reaction of olefinic acids.¹² The sulfur catalyst **1** could be obtained by the reaction between (*N,N*-dimethylamino)pyridine (DMAP, **2**) and aryl isothiocyanate **3** (Scheme 2, eq 1). Our more recent

Scheme 2. Synthesis of Catalysts and Proposed Origin of **6** and **7**



experiments to obtain the analogous oxygen zwitterion (i.e., the putative zwitterion "5") for the halocyclization, however, have led to an intriguing discovery. When DMAP (**2**) was reacted with 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl isocyanate (**4**), a white solid was obtained. Detailed physical analysis revealed that this white solid was not the putative zwitterion "5" (Scheme 2, eq 2) but unexpectedly consisted of three components: DMAP (**2**), *N,N'*-bis[3,5-(bistrifluoromethyl)-

phenyl]urea (**6**), and 3,5-(bistrifluoromethyl)aniline (**7**) in a 3:1:1 ratio (Scheme 2, eq 3). When the individual components were mixed according to the 3:1:1 ratio, the same ¹H NMR spectra could be obtained as that of the white solid. On the basis of the ratio, we speculated that the three components were furnished as a result of the rapid hydrolysis of 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl isocyanate (**4**) by moisture¹³ to yield the corresponding carbamic acid followed by decarboxylation, which gives aniline **7**. Nucleophilic attack of aniline **7** to another molecule of isocyanate **4** could then yield urea **6**. It is worth mentioning that in the absence of DMAP (**2**) the hydrolysis of **4** to give **7** was sluggish.

More surprisingly, it was realized that the unexpected three-component mixture could catalyze the bromolactamization of olefinic amides. The initial model reaction was performed using olefinic amide **8a** as the substrate and *N*-bromosuccinimide (NBS) as the stoichiometric halogen source. Compound **8a** contains an electron-withdrawing *p*-toluenesulfonyl group which increases the acidity of the amide proton and therefore might aid in *N*-cyclization. The *N*-cyclization and *O*-cyclization selectivity was examined using ¹H NMR. Initially, we tested several literature reported protocols that could promote *N*-cyclization. Sodium hydrogen carbonate and triethylamine, which could be used to induce *N*-cyclization of alkenyl urea systems,^{8f} as well as *N,N'*-bis[3,5-(bistrifluoromethyl)phenyl]thiourea (**10**),¹⁴ were ineffective in promoting the desired *N*-cyclization of **8a** (Table 1, entries 1–4). Notably, the reaction was also inert toward CuBr₂, a promoter used in bromoaminocyclizations^{2f} (entry 5) and a combination of Pd(OAc)₂/CuBr₂ (entry 6), that had been used in the bromo-*N*-cyclization of olefinic carbamates.^{8a,b} In the presence of zwitterionic catalyst **1**, a moderate *N/O*-selectivity was obtained (Table 1,

Table 1. Catalyst Screening of the Bromolactamization of Substrate Amide **8a**^a

C=CC(=O)Nc1ccc(S(=O)(=O)C)cc1>>C1CC(=O)N(C1)Cc2ccc(S(=O)(=O)C)cc2.BrC1CC(=O)N(C1)Cc2ccc(S(=O)(=O)C)cc2

entry	catalyst/promoter (loading)	time (h)	ratio of 9a : 9a' ^b
1	NaHCO ₃ (1.6 equiv)	0.5	1:10.0
2	Et ₃ N (5 mol %)	0.5	NR
3	Et ₃ N (1.6 equiv)	0.5	NR
4	10 , S=C[NH(3,5-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₃) ₂] (5 mol %)	0.5	9a' only
5 ^c	CuBr ₂ (1.0 equiv)	24	NR
6 ^d	Pd(OAc) ₂ (10 mol %)	24	NR
7	1 (5 mol %)	0.5	1:0.74
8	white solid (2 / 6 / 7 , 3:1:1) (5 mol %)	0.5	1:0.4
9 ^e	white solid (2 / 6 / 7 , 3:1:1) (5 mol %)	0.5	NR
10 ^f	white solid (2 / 6 / 7 , 3:1:1) (5 mol %)	0.5	1:1.1

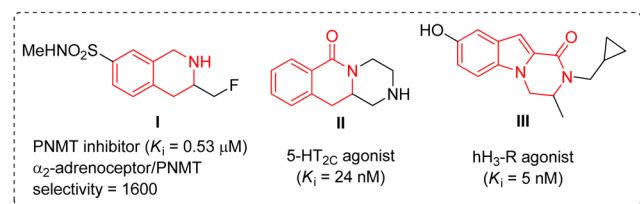
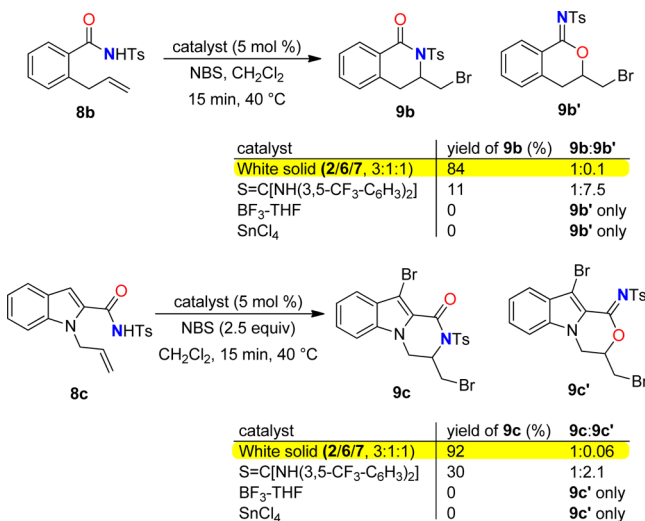
^aReactions were carried out with olefinic amide **8a** (0.3 mmol), catalyst, and NBS (0.45 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (6 mL) at 40 °C in the absence of light. ^bDetermined by ¹H NMR analysis on the crude product mixture with internal standard. Unless stated otherwise, full consumption of **8a** was achieved. ^cMeCN (6 mL) was used as the solvent. ^dReaction was carried out with **8a** (0.3 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (0.03 mmol), CuBr₂ (1.5 mmol), and K₂CO₃ (0.6 mmol) in THF (3 mL) at 25 °C in the absence of light. ^e*N*-Chlorosuccinimide was used as the halogen source. ^f*N*-Iodosuccinimide was used as the halogen source. NR = no reaction.

entry 7). When the white solid (2/6/7, 3:1:1) was employed as a catalyst (5 mol %) to the reaction, the selectivity was further enhanced to 1:0.4 in favor of the formation of lactam (Table 1, entry 8) in a short reaction time of 30 min. Interestingly, no reaction was observed when *N*-chlorosuccinimide (NCS) was used, while *N*-iodosuccinimide (NIS) resulted in poorer selectivity (Table 1, entries 9 and 10).

Further experiments demonstrated that the presence of all three components is critical in the catalysis. The *N*-selectivities dropped dramatically when one or two components were removed from the catalyst system.¹⁵ When 2, 6, and 7 were individually mixed in a 3:1:1 ratio and used as a reconstituted catalyst system in place of the white solid in the bromolactamization of 8a, the same *N/O*-cyclization ratio could be obtained.¹⁶

With this promising result, we next directed our efforts toward the synthesis of pharmaceutically important moieties based on the 1,2,3,4-tetrahydroisoquinoline and indole scaffolds (Scheme 3).¹⁷ The synthesis of these scaffolds usually requires

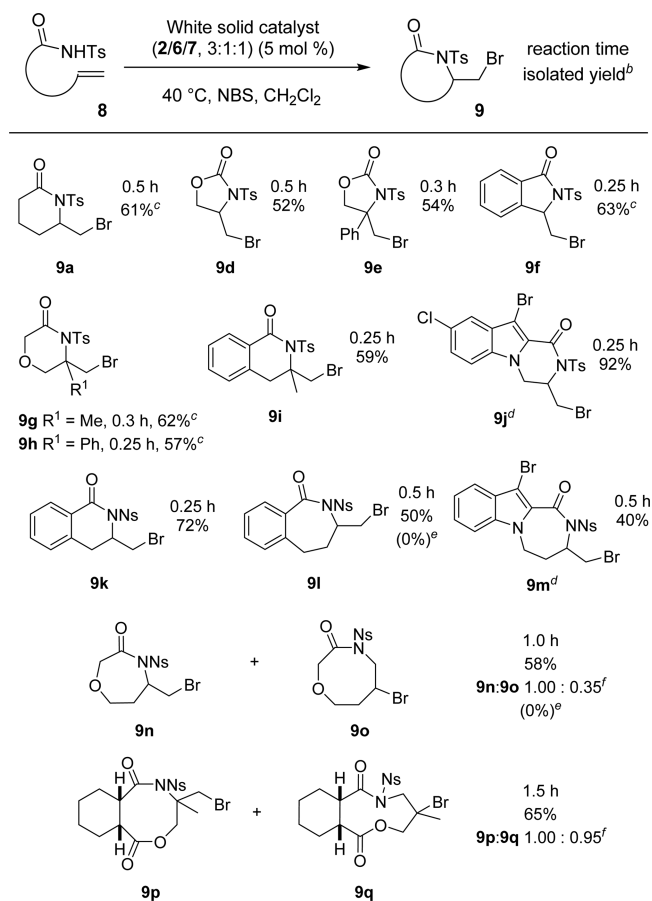
Scheme 3. Cyclization of 8b and 8c



laborious multistep sequences. Nonetheless, cyclization of 8b under the optimized conditions gave 1-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroisoquinoline 9b in 84% yield in just 15 min. The tetrahydroisoquinoline core of 9b is featured in both the highly selective phenylethanolamine *N*-methyltransferase (PNMT) inhibitor I¹⁸ and the serotonin (5-HT_{2c}) receptor agonist II.¹⁹ In addition, the skeleton of III (a conformationally rigid and potent histamine H₃ inverse agonist which is derived from pitolisant and GSK 189254)²⁰ could readily be furnished through the cyclization of 8c, affording 9c in 92% yield in an equally quick reaction time. In stark contrast, very little or no *N*-cyclized products 9b and 9c were formed, and significant amounts of *O*-cyclized products were obtained instead when *N,N'*-bis[3,5-(bistrifluoromethyl)phenyl]thiourea or Lewis acids BF₃-THF and SnCl₄ were used as catalysts. These

observations further attest to the enhanced *N*- over *O*-cyclization selectivity with this novel catalytic protocol. The structures of 9b and 9c were confirmed by X-ray crystallographic studies.¹⁵

The preferential *N*-cyclization also extends to the cyclization of other olefinic amide substrates of varying scaffolds. Table 2

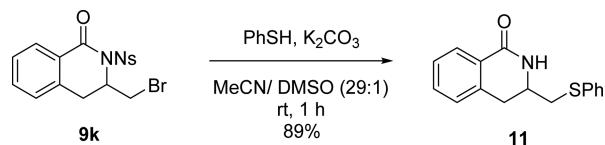
Table 2. Scope of the Bromolactamization of 8^a

^aReactions were carried out with olefinic amide 6a (0.3 mmol), white solid catalyst (2/6/7, 3:1:1) (0.015 mmol), and NBS (0.45 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (6 mL) at 40 °C in the absence of light. ^bIsolated yield by column chromatography. ^cCa. 25% of *O*-cyclized product was detected as determined by ¹H NMR on the crude reaction mixture. ^d2.5 equiv of NBS was used. ^eThe parentheses indicate the yield of the bromolactam when the reaction was carried out with 8 (0.3 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ catalyst (0.03 mmol), CuBr₂ (1.5 mmol), and K₂CO₃ (0.6 mmol) in THF (3 mL) at 25 °C in the absence of light for 24 h. ^fDetermined by ¹H NMR.

shows the scope of the halolactamization reaction, where a structurally diverse range of products are displayed. These examples include monocyclic 6-membered lactam (9a), cyclic carbamates (9d and 9e), lactams with aromatic scaffolds (9f, 9i, and 9k), morpholines (9g and 9h), and a piperazine system (9j). Notably, medium ring-sized lactams 9l–q could also be furnished by using this catalytic protocol. In the case of formation of 9l and 9n/9o, attempts were made to synthesize these lactams via palladium catalysis^{8a,b} as a comparison, and no reaction was observed. In general, the lactams were achieved with good yields and selectivities.²¹ We then explored the possibility of further chemical manipulations on the bromolactam products. Gratifyingly, 9k could undergo an efficient

one-pot denosylation and sulfenylation reaction to give lactam **11** in good yield (Scheme 4).

Scheme 4. One-Pot Denosylation and Sulfenylation of **9k**



To understand the effect of component variations on the catalysis, we performed further studies using reconstituted catalyst systems (Scheme 5). Thiourea **10**, a sulfur analogue of

Scheme 5. Studies on the Effect of Different Components Using Reconstituted Catalyst Systems

Reconstituted catalyst system (5 mol%)	Entry	Catalyst system (3:1:1)	9a:9a'
8a → 9a + 9a' NBS, CH ₂ Cl ₂ 40 °C, 0.5 h	1	2/10/7	1:0.9
	2	2/12/7	1:0.9
	3	2/6/Et ₃ N	1:0.5
	4	2/6/13	1:0.4

6, gave a lower *N*-selectivity than urea **6** under the same reaction conditions (Scheme 4, entry 1). Modifications to urea **6** were also performed. The *N,N'*-dimethylurea **12** returned with lower *N*-cyclized product conversion, suggesting that the N–H might be involved in the reaction mechanism, possibly via a dual hydrogen bonding interaction (entry 2).²² Interestingly, when the aniline partner was replaced with triethylamine, a similar ratio of **9a**/**9a'** was obtained. This may suggest that the aromatic and the N–H moieties do not play crucial roles in controlling the selectivity (entry 3). It is noteworthy that triethylamine alone could not promote the bromolactamization (Table 1, entry 2), indicating that the three components might work cooperatively in the reaction (vide infra). A similar selectivity was also obtained when 2-bromopyridine (**13**) was used in place of aniline **7**, which further suggests that the N–H in this weakly basic aniline component is not a dominant factor (entry 4).

In the course of the investigation, we realized that while both urea **6** alone and a mixture of urea **6**/NBS were insoluble in CH₂Cl₂, a DMAP (**2**)/urea **6**/NBS mixture dissolved quickly in CH₂Cl₂ to give a colorless solution. Preliminary studies by ¹H NMR indicated that DMAP (**2**), urea **6**, and NBS might interact with one another,^{15,23} which could account for these solubility differences. We had also suspected that the three components might react irreversibly to give a new catalytic species in situ. Nonetheless, the possibility was unlikely to happen on the basis of the ¹H NMR studies: the chemical shifts and integrations of the individual components perfectly matched with the signals in the 3:1:1 mixture. To further verify this suspicion, a set of careful experiments were performed. The three-component system DMAP (**2**), urea **6**, and aniline **7** were stirred with NBS for 1 h in CH₂Cl₂ at 40 °C. 1,3,5-Trimethoxybenzene (1.2 equiv) was then added to the mixture to capture the electrophilic Br. After that, monobrominated 1,3,5-trimethoxybenzene was obtained quantitatively, and more crucially, all the three components could be

recovered. This suggests that the three-component system might work cooperatively through weak interactions (e.g., hydrogen bonding) rather than forming a new species irreversibly.

While a definite mechanism awaits thorough investigation, we could summarize the overall observations on the basis of these studies: (1) aniline **7**, DMAP (**2**), and urea **6**, play unique roles in this catalytic protocol and the three catalytic partners might have a synergistic effect; (2) the relatively weaker base aniline **7** and the relatively stronger base DMAP (**2**) seem to serve different functions in this catalytic protocol.

In summary, a facile and selective bromolactamization of olefinic amides has been developed using an unprecedented three-component catalyst system, with NBS as the stoichiometric brominating agent. *N*-Cyclization preferentially occurs over *O*-cyclization, leading to the formation of a structurally diverse range of lactams including both small and medium-ring sizes.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

General Information. All reactions that required anhydrous conditions were carried out via standard procedures under nitrogen atmosphere. Commercially available reagents were used as received. The solvents were dried and purified over a solvent purification system. Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed using pre-coated silica gel foils. Chromatographic purification was performed on silica gel (0.040–0.063 mm). Infrared spectra were recorded on a FTIR spectrophotometer and reported in wave numbers (cm⁻¹). Melting points were determined on a melting point apparatus. ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on either a spectrometer operating at 300 MHz for protons and 75 MHz for carbon nuclei or a spectrometer operating at 500 MHz for protons and 125 MHz for carbon nuclei. Data for ¹H NMR spectra are reported as follows: chemical shift (δ) in parts per million (multiplicity, coupling constant (Hz), integration). Data for ¹H NMR spectra are referenced to the center line of CDCl₃ (δ 7.26) as the internal standard. Data for ¹³C NMR spectra are referenced to the center line of CDCl₃ (δ 77.0) as the internal standard. High-resolution mass spectra were obtained on a mass spectrometer in ESI or EI mode using a TOF mass analyzer.

Preparation of Three-Component Catalyst System 2/6/7 (3:1:1). (*N,N*-Dimethylamino)pyridine (DMAP) (122 mg, 1.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv) was added to a solution of 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl isocyanate (173 μ L, 1.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv) in toluene (2 mL) and stirred for 0.5 h. Upon completion, the mixture was filtered to obtain the product as a white solid. The solid was then recrystallized from hot toluene, filtered, and dried under vacuum.

Three-Component Catalyst System: DMAP (2), 1,3-Bis(3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)urea (6), and 3,5-Bis(trifluoromethyl)aniline (7) (ca. 3:1:1). White solid (377.1 mg, quantitative yield). Mp: 75.6–77.3 °C. IR (KBr): 3108, 2939, 1738, 1608, 1385, 1282, 1172, 1123, 995 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): DMAP (**2**) δ 8.21 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 6.54 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 3.03 (s, 3H); 1,3-bis(3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)urea (**6**) δ 7.87 (s, 1.3 H), 7.46 (s, 0.7 H); 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)aniline (**7**) δ 7.19 (s, 0.3 H), 7.02 (s, 0.7 H). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): DMAP (**2**) δ 154.6, 148.9, 106.9, 38.9; 1,3-bis(3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)urea (**6**) δ 152.7, 140.8, 132.0 (q, *J* = 33.3 Hz), 125.0, 121.4, 118.1; 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)aniline (**7**) δ 147.7, 132.0 (q, *J* = 33.3 Hz), 125.2, 113.9, 111.0.

Representative Procedure for the Preparation of Olefinic Amides 8a to 8c and 8f to 8o. The method is based on that in the literature.^{8b} 5-Hexenoic acid (119 μ L, 1.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv) was added into a solution of 1-ethyl-3-(3-(dimethylamino)propyl)carbodiimide hydrochloride, EDCI (250 mg, 1.3 mmol, 1.3 equiv), and DMAP (171 mg, 1.4 mmol, 1.4 equiv) in CH₂Cl₂ (4 mL) at 0 °C. *p*-Toluenesulfonamide, TsNH₂ (205 mg, 1.2 mmol, 1.2 equiv), was then added in one portion to the mixture. The mixture was allowed to warm slowly to room temperature and stirred for 24 h. Upon completion, the mixture was diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (6 mL) and washed

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