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Loc.

Woman at top in Lisbon

From Jill Jolliffe
in Lisbon

Miss Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo, who is 49, yesterday accepted the invitation of President Antonio Ramalho Eanes to be Portugal's new Prime Minister. There now appears to be no obstacle to the dissolution of Parliament and the holding of early elections, as her nomination is acceptable to the Socialist Party, which otherwise might have opposed the caretaker Government.

Speaking at the presidential palace after meeting President Eanes, Miss Pintassilgo said that she hoped to push the Government's programme through quickly. If it is accepted, Parliament will be dissolved and elections held within 90 days. The new Prime Minister leads Portugal's eleventh Government since the 1974 revolution.

Miss Pintassilgo, who has headed Portugal's delegation to UNESCO since 1975, is known as a radical Catholic and is widely respected for her abilities.

She holds a degree in chemical engineering. Before the 1974 revolution, she was a consultant to one of Portugal's largest industrial concerns, then formed part of the Portuguese mission to the UN in 1971 and 1972. She has been president of the progressive Catholic organisation Pax Romana.

After the 1974 revolution, Miss Pintassilgo held several Government posts, including Minister for Social Affairs.

Her appointment does not meet with the approval of the Right-wing parties, who have joined forces for the elections as the Democratic Alliance. They do not, however, have the combined numbers to block her programme in Parliament, and are already committed to supporting early elections. A spokesman for the alliance denounced Miss Pintassilgo as "a Third Worldist with socialist

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