



Senhora Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo, Portuguese ambassador to Unesco in Paris, smiling at reporters questions yesterday after accepting the President's offer to become her country's first woman Prime Minister.

Fundação Cuidar do Futuro

Woman is chosen as Portugal's president

By OUR LISBON CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT EANES yesterday appointed Portugal's first-ever woman Prime Minister, Senhora Maria De Lurdes Pintassilgo, 49.

Sra Pintassilgo hopes to form a Cabinet by early next week. She would head a caretaker administration charged with organising an interim election in the autumn.

Once her caretaker government has been installed and its programme approved in Parliament by the four main parties, the president will formally dissolve the Assembly and set a date for polling, likely to be at the end of October.

The country will then face 18 months of electioneering as four sets of elections are scheduled, culminating in new presidential balloting in 1981.

She jokingly told reporters after accepting her position that the Portuguese and the British, long time allies, now had some thing more in common — two women Prime Ministers.

In terms of Portugal's rigorous constitution, the new Prime Minister will have to present a programme to Parliament for approval. It is not certain whether the parties will support her in this vote.

The Right-wing Christian Democrats and Social Democrats are unhappy with her choice, while the Socialists may abstain on a vote. This would leave only the Communists in favour.

Should she be defeated however, other constitutional mechanisms would allow the President to dismiss the deputies and hold elections as planned.

Sra Pintassilgo, a chemical engineering graduate and one of the country's leading intellectuals, will head Portugal's 11th post revolutionary government since 1974. She is unmarried and was formerly Ambassador to Unesco in Paris.

She is a staunch Roman Catholic, insists on being called an "engineer," and is believed to have Socialist sympathies.

